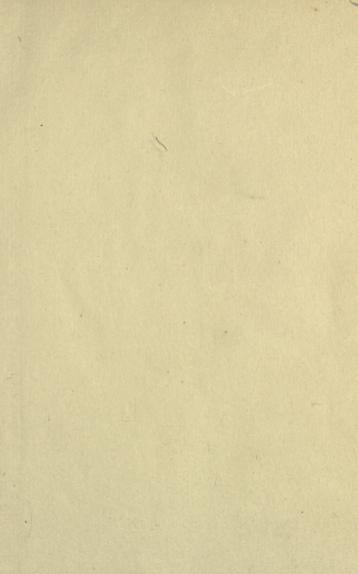
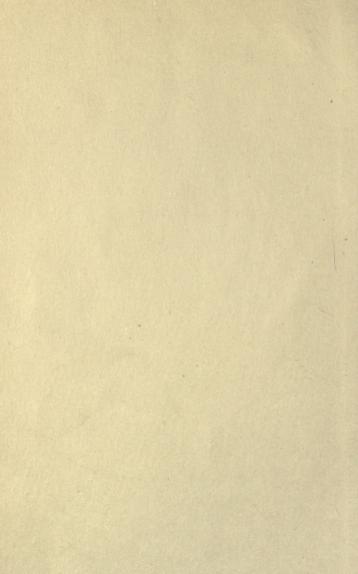
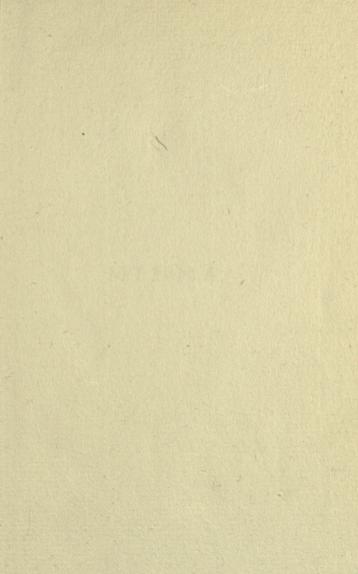


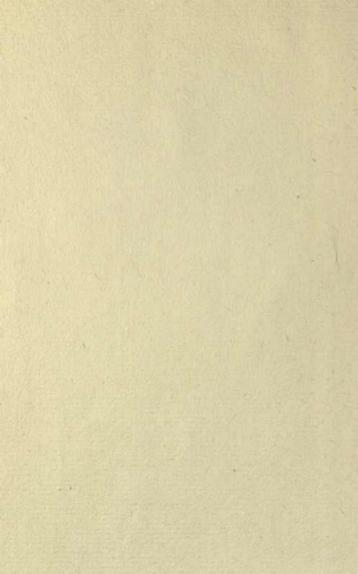
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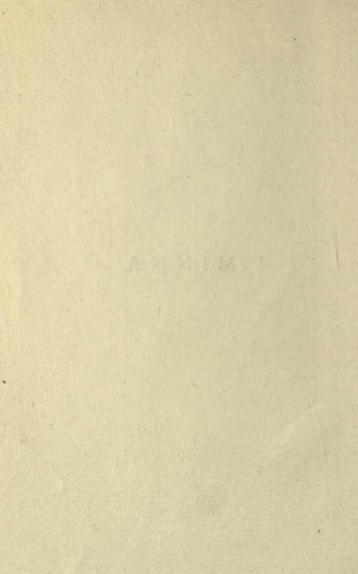


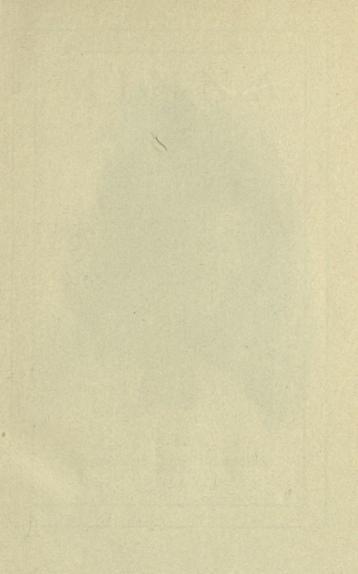






# MINNA







Minna

# MINNA

WIFE OF THE YOUNG RABBI

A Povel

By Wilhelmina Wittigschlager

DRAWINGS BY
W. HERBERT DUNTON



New York Consolidated Retail Booksellers 1905

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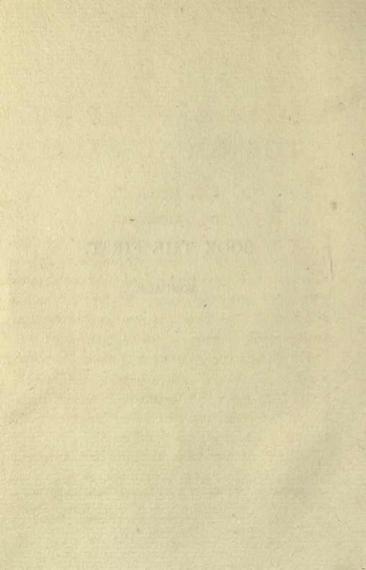
## SOT OF HARFATANATURE

"The sun passeth through all pollutions, remaining itself as pure as before.

—LORD BACON.

### BOOK THE FIRST.

BONDAGE.



# MINNA: WIFE OF THE YOUNG RABBI.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE BETROTHAL.

I shall never forget the day when the man I called "father" returned home with a keen look of satisfaction on his face, and exclaimed: "Masiltof (congratulations), Minke! You are a kalo (bride \*) and to a vailen ingil (ambitious, studious young man), a yeshiva bocher; " †

He walked excitedly up and down the room, stroking his beard and snapping his fingers, singing to himself a favorite "bimmim bam" which the Jews sing when they feel very good and have had a little schnabbs—

"Terra bimmim bam, bimmim bam, bimmim

† Yeshiva Bocher. A Jewish divinity student; literally, a

"student of the book" (Talmud).

<sup>\*</sup> Kalo—A Jewish girl is a bride from the time of the engagement to the day of her marriage, after which she is called a yunge-frau (young woman) though sixty years old.

bam, bim bam, terra bimmim bam, bimmim bam, bim bam! Ah, yes! A vailen ingil. Ah! An ingil—a tzaska (toy)."

I stood dazed. His behavior and the news he brought made me feel faint. I must have turned pale, for my father exclaimed:

"Look at her, how pale she has got! Just as if I had told her she was going to be killed! Na! What do you think of that?" Then turning to me, "Do you think I am going to keep you until you are old and gray? Old enough to choose for yourself? Perhaps you would like to choose your own choson,\* eh? Or run away to the missionaries, eh? What do you think of her, eh?" and he cast a half-concealed side-glance at his wife, who winked in return.

"We have reasons for wishing you to marry young," she said, "but not as it happened to a rich Jew some years ago."

She again winked slyly at my father.

"His daughter disgraced him when she was but eighteen. They had to take her away to

<sup>\*</sup> Choson. A young Jew is called the choson from the time of his engagement until he is married.

#### The Betrothal.

another country. No, thanks, I don't want to travel on such terms. We have never found out who the Jew and his daughter were, but we are watching the mamser (illegitimate child) very closely and will see that she does not disgrace the people she is with. We have no money to secrete our daughter's shame, nor do we propose ever to experience such zorus, (trouble).

"Married at thirteen! she exclaimed. "Yes! When you are thirteen, you will be under the heibel," \* and will be a veibel (young married woman)."

I could not hear all they said. Everything swam before my eyes. I first felt hot, burning all over; perspiration covered my forehead—and then again I was shivering cold. All that that woman—that woman who called herself my mother—had said, pierced me through and through. I was only a child and could not comprehend it all, but I knew that something was wrong. I tried to speak, but only stammered, and neither my parents nor myself

<sup>\*</sup> Heibel. Calico cap (generally black) that a married Jewess has to wear under her wig.

understood what I was trying to say. With a twist of her head toward my father, my mother again continued:

"What do you think of her? Did I not tell you it was not too soon to bring her under the heibel? Look at her! Look! she knows enough already to feel frightened! The marschess! (loose character). Twelve and a half? Why, when my mother told me I was going to be married, I was tickled to death! And do you think I knew about anything as she does already? Why, all I thought of was the nice black silk dress I was to wear, and the music. God be thanked! We are not any too soon. If we wait till that girl is two years older, she will never be married as a Jewish daughter should be—respectably.

"We shall take care—we shall take care," she went on shaking her forefinger at me, "that you are a veibel before six months are past. And if you like to know who your future husband is—Reb Schmia's Shabbas!"\*

<sup>\*</sup> Shabbas Sabbath—Saturday. By saying "Reb (Mr.) Schmia's Shabbas" it is understood that he is the yeshiva bocher, or charity student, whom Schmia feeds every Saturday.

#### The Betrothal.

Just then the horn blew. It was time for me to drive the cow to the market-place in the center of the town, where the cowherd used to wait every day until the maids brought their cows to be driven to pasture; but though I heard the horn, I would not move. "Well," my mother exclaimed sharply, "did you not hear the horn blow? Are you lame?"

With her usual shower of curses and blows across my shoulders, I awoke from my dazed condition. I went to the barn and drove out the cow; but upon reaching the market-place the other cows had gone. I could see them far up the road that led to the pasture and followed, driving our cow slowly. I did not know what I was doing till I reached the pasture. Then, throwing myself on the grass, I broke out sobbing and crying, "Oh, my God! What am I living for? Is it possible that this woman is my mother?"

I could not remember ever having received a word of praise as other children had when their little duties were fulfilled; nor had I ever known the sound of a kind word. Always scolded and beaten, I was the first to rise and

the last to bed; when scarcely able to walk, I already had household duties assigned me. I had never owned a pair of new shoes; the old ones that my mother could no longer wear were good enough for me. Her old dresses tucked in under the waistband were the only clothes I had ever known.

"Oh, my God!" I sobbed. "Now I am to be married to one of those filthy scarecrows. I want to die! I want to die!" and exhausted from crying, I fell asleep. How long I slept there I did not know; but when I awoke and started for home, I realized that I would have to submit to my fate, but was determined that if I was forced to become the wife of that yeshiva bocher, I would never live with him. No, I would go to Siberia rather than link my life with such a man!

#### CHAPTER II.

#### THE YESHIVA BOCHER.

As the day of the wedding drew nearer, my horror at the thought of being married to a yeshiva bocher increased. Reared amongst the poor Jews as I was, I had ample opportunity to see and know all the revolting details of the lives and habits of these Russian divinity students, the squalid and filthy class to which my intended husband belonged.

In the small towns of Russia, the poor Jewish boy with ambitions above the life of a drudging mechanic finds no opportunity to acquire the education that will fit him for a mercantile career or a profession. Still his brain burns with a desire to learn—he cares not what, but something to raise him above the condition of servitude into which he has been born. Without money or a change of clothing, or even a home, perhaps, he sets out to get an education in the only way left open to him. He becomes

a yeshiva bocher, or what in English might be called a divinity student, were this term not too dignified to characterize a novitiate in a school that as often prepares for a career of idleness and knavery as for a life of industry and holiness. However, the sort of education he acquires largely depends upon the boy's character at the time of his taking up the calling. He may be only twelve years of age, and yet have his moral tendencies already fixed for life, so precocious are the Jewish lads. What he will be when he emerges from the school also depends much upon the purpose with which he entered it.

The yeshiva bocher studies at the beishamedres, an annex of the synagogue, found in every Russian Jewish town or settlement. While the synagogue is open only on the Sabbath and on holidays during the principal prayers, the beishamedres is always open for the daily prayers which the orthodox Jew is bound to attend. In the forenoon there is davnen (morning prayer), in the early afternoon mincho, and in the evening mirov (vespers).

The beishamedres is usually one large room

#### The Yeshiva Bocher.

with a light board partition to separate the men and the women during prayers. In the room where the men congregate is a small altar near the middle of the wall, and a platform called "bimma" in the centre for readings and prayers. Under the windows stand long wide tables with benches on either side. Between the two divisions of the room is a great low brick oven, which serves to heat both apartments; and during the cold Russian winter as many veshiva bocherim as can possibly crawl on it will lie there for the warmth. Along the wall are shelves and closets, filled with religious books of great variety even in the beishamedres of the smallest towns. Three or four rooms attached to this building serve as a city residence for the rabbi.

The young men who are ambitious and anxious for a religious education never begin their studies in their home town, where they are probably too well known ever to gain that honor which is proverbially the prophet's due. Leaving his poor parents, or perhaps his widowed mother, the aspirant for rabbinical honors starts out on foot, to make his way to

some other town where entire disassociation with his past life will form his strongest recommendation to the good will and respect of the people.

When such a one arrives in a strange town he knows he can always make the beishamedres his headquarters. Here he may come at any time and sleep in the women's part on the floor, without being disturbed or questioned. So he goes to the shammes (caretaker) and says to him: "I came here to study, to be a yeshiva bocher, and I want you to be kind enough to find me a few days if possible." By "days" he means accommodations of the following nature:

Every member of the Jewish community knows that these young men must be fed, and that they are wretchedly poor: consequently they must be provided for. The caretaker goes to one of the Jewish citizens and says: "Reb Yankel, a new young man has come in; can you give him Monday or Tuesday, as most convenient to you?" Reb Yankel generally replies, "I will." Then off the caretaker goes to another citizen and says; "Reb Leib, there is a

#### The Yeshiva Bocher.

young man come into town to-day. Will you give him one day in the week?"

Thus he goes the rounds until he has filled in the seven days of the week for the student. The young man is then advised which days he is to go to the different citizens. He knows that every Monday he is to eat with Reb Yankel; on Tuesday with Reb Leib; on Wednesday with Reb Maise; on Thursday with Reb Salmen, and so on.

Fortunate is that young man who, on his arrival in town, is the possessor of a ruble or two with which to bribe the caretaker. This important personage knows which of the citizens will feed the newcomer willingly and generously, putting on the table enough bread and butter, and occasionally a piece of meat. He is also well aware which citizen gives a "day" out of vanity rather than charity, and which one sets rubbish on the table that even the servants, who in Russia are accustomed only to the poorest food, could not eat it. Such men, if they provide bread, put no knife with it, so that the *yeshiva bocher* may not take too large a portion. But, whether his host is

generous or stingy, the poor student does not dare to complain. So if the *shammes* receives a small remuneration, the young man gets something to eat; whereas if the *shammes* is not "tipped," the student gets his "days" but no food.

Many of the students are compelled to eat in as many as fifteen houses during the seven days, for often the citizens will take a student for part of a day only. One gives him breakfast, another lunch, and a third will offer supper alone. So he fills in his days; but not one has ever been known to say that he was able to fill his stomach.

Clothes, too, are furnished by the citizens. The man who has a yeshiva bocher at his table, occasionally supplies an old coat or trousers, when the raggedness of his guest has shamed him into generosity. Very often a slim young fellow of fifteen—they are always slim for obvious reasons—may be seen wearing a coat and trousers that had been worn by a six-footer, who probably weighed two hundred and eighty pounds. As for shoes, the yeshiva bocher is obliged to wear them until his pro-

#### The Yeshiva Bocher.

truding toes shame some citizen into hunting him up a cast-off pair.

Since the Hebrew religion, as it is understood and practised among the old-fashioned, orthodox Jews, absolutely forbids any man to shave his beard or mustache, and, as the student has no money to get his hair cut,-nor would it be proper for him to do so except perhaps twice a year-before the two great holidays, "Peshach" (Passover) and New Year, or "Roshhashona Yom Kippur" (the Day of Atonement),-a more forlorn appearance than the yeshiva bocher presents is inconceivable. He is the very disembodiment of wretchedness. Furthermore, these students seldom possess underwear; or if they do happen to have any, they wear it until it falls off their backs. During the winter they are frequently unable to go out for their meals, on account of insufficient clothing.

Owing to these filthy and neglected conditions, every *yeshiva bocher* is afflicted with some kind of rash or skin disease. Their heads especially become full of sores and vermin. Whether or not it is due to the con-

stant scratching of their polls, it must be confessed that there are many bright wits among these students, and even in these wretched conditions they occasionally find some ingenious means for recreation. For instance, they have little private hunting parties late at night, at which they supply both the instruments of of sport and the quarry. After the beishamedres is closed the students go into the women's department, and with the assistance of a candle start the chase. They take off their clothes and hunt through them for game. The one who has the largest herd is elected master of the hunt, a position which he holds until he is superseded by a more populous huntsman. A prominent citizen, who had been a student, once said that no self-respecting yeshiva bocher would consider himself worthy of the name unless he pastured a goodly herd.

How do the yeshiva bocherim get their pocket money? Some of them are fortunate enough to receive occasionally a few kopecks from a mother or some other relative, but most of them must earn what they get. They do so in the following manner:

#### The Yeshiva Bocher.

When a Jew or any member of his family is taken ill, and the doctor says there is no hope for his recovery, some of the relatives run through the streets to the beishamedres screaming like mad. Then, when they hear the wild cries approaching, a broad smile of anticipation overspreads the faces of the yeshiva bocherim. Without a word they move toward the altar, each carrying a small prayerbook in his hand. One of them asks the suppliant relative, "What is the name of the sick person, and what ove (saint) do you wish us to invoke?" After a prayer has been offered, the grateful relative distributes a few kopecks among the yeshiva bocherim. Sometimes they get three, five, even as many as ten kopecks apiece (a kopeck is a half cent); and you may be assured, that in their hearts they continue to pray for some time that another citizen may become sick, so that a few more kopecks may be added to their meager earnings.

In regard to their religious education, the new students appeal to such of their fellows as are farther along in their studies and are

willing to lend a helping hand to the beginner. Those students who are most advanced in their education, when overtaken by some especial difficulty, go to the rabbi, who holds it his duty to assist them. Those citizens of the town who have been students and have now nothing else to do but lie around in the beishamedres among their books, are often of great assistance to the knowledge-seeking yeshiva bocher, among whom are some who have a desire to learn more than religion. Perhaps, as youngsters, they have played with rich children who taught them the alphabet. They manage to procure a few German or Russian books and study secretly; but woe betide them if a fanatical religionist should chance to hear of this devotion to profane learning; for the ambitious student would be driven out of the town in disgrace.

There are some again who are a lazy, worthless set: they do not care to learn a trade, as they have no desire to work. They prefer to lead an idle life. They never study, but lie about the *beishamedres* willing to be dirty, filthy and hungry, so long as they do not have

#### The Yeshiva Bocher.

to work. They are sharp, for when they see a citizen enter the *beishamedres*, they open a prayer-book, droop their heads, wrinkle their foreheads, and look like the hardest-working students present.

The yeshiva bocher often marries into a good family that, possessing a little money, seeks honor in the matrimonial alliances of the daughters. Such parents choose a poor divinity student, buy him a suit of clothes, very often a watch and chain, and give him their daughter in marriage. After the wedding the father starts the newly wed couple in business, so that the *yeshiva* bocher may continue his studies as a citizen, while his wife attends to business and supports him. Many students, knowing no other kind of career than the one they have chosen, allow themselves to be led by these temptations. Of these, the ambitious students finally become rabbis and procure good positions; while the others continue their idle life, in addition to making the unfortunate women whom they have married hopelessly wretched and unhappy.

## CHAPTER III.

#### THE BETROTHAL OF A YESHIVA BOCHER.

THE Jew expresses himself every day at his morning prayers: "I thank Thee, O Heavenly Father, that Thou hast not created me a woman." That ought to answer all questions as to how a woman stands in general in Jewry. Her lot is especially hard in Russia, among the poorer class, who consider it a grievous affliction to have a daughter. Therefore, a girl's education is neglected. She is never sent to school; and throughout childhood, she is kept a slave to her parents. After marriage, and until death, she is to be a slave to her husband; so what need has she for an education? If a girl is unfortunate enough to be homely, her fate is sealed; she must depend upon her father until she is old and gray. No money, and a homely daughter! Mercy! Even with a good-looking girl, plenty of money is required to get her married. Think of a poor man who

has three, four, or five homely daughters! In such families the girls are generally married off to yeshiva bocherim.

If the father has no money he has at least a little cabin of his own in the city and can be considered a baalh' bos (respected citizen). So the schatchen (matrimonial agent) explains to the young man, without giving him an opportunity to look at the wealth, that there is a baalh bos in town who has a daughter: "One of the finest, greatest housekeepers; who has knitted about fifty pairs of stockings for herself" (she really has only three pairs). "Who has feather-beds piled to the ceiling" (these are three old pillows inherited from her grandmother upon which two generations of babies have been raised). "And linen! Ah, so much of it that you cannot shut the kasten (chest). And fancy work too! I have never seen the like!"

This schatchen usually wears a long beard and is highly respected. For five rubles he will smuggle any maid off or any man in.

"Yes," he will go on, "she writes and reads Hebrew like water" (a convincing expression

in sound, but in reality quite non-committal). "Do you think she has to go to a neighbor to write an address in German or Russian? Oh, no, she can do it all by herself." The old scamp is telling many lies, but he does not blush; he is accustomed to prevarication in the good cause of race propagation. As a matter of course, it is essential to his business. Is the girl to be married off absolutely shapeless? With a broad grin he digs the student in the ribs and whispers cunningly: "Ah! she is a fat one." Is the yeshiva bocher still lacking in enthusiasm, the schatchen will add: "And smart! She will make a splendid business woman. You won't have to work when you get married. They will give you a thousand rubles and she will run the business. Do you know who her grandfather was? Why, one of the greatest! What was his name? Ah! I have forgotten. I will tell you some other time. Her father is one of the most respected citizens in town" (he might say this of a horse thief).

So the schatchen goes from one yeshiva bocher to another as if he were a personal

friend, trying to give each a chance; until he comes across a lazy fellow who doesn't care whom he marries, or what his wife looks like. This one, when he hears of the thousand rubles says to himself, "I will marry the girl, and afterwards, if I find she doesn't suit me, I will go to America." A thousand rubles! Just think what that means to a yeshiva bocher.

As soon as the young man consents to the proposal, the schatchen turns round and says, "And what will I get for giving you such a rich kalo (bride)?" The young man promises him something, and the schatchen says, "Well, I'm willing to see her parents about it." The appointment is then made in the parlor of some wealthy citizen's house, as every Jew who is in comfortable circumstances considers it a Hebrew charity to help a poorer man smuggle off his daughter, and never refuses when he is asked: "Can the meeting be in your parlor?"

The yeshiva bocher is brought into quite a comfortable room in a good-looking house. The father of the girl is there wearing his Sabbath capote (coat) and looking prosperous.

With snuff-box in hand, and one foot over the other, he sits carelessly on the sofa. When the young man enters he is at once impressed that here is the owner of the house. He looks around—everything appears comfortable, and the bos on the sofa seems to be at home. The yeshiva bocher is welcomed somewhat coldly. He is asked: "Have you served as a soldier?" He usually answers, "I have a green billet." That may signify that he drew a lucky number, or was found unfit for service. This answer is satisfactory, but the next blow is a hard one. "Have your people any money to give you?" That is a question the father never fails to ask, to scare the young man into such a condition that he will not have the courage to ask anything for himself. The yeshiva bocher, mortified and embarrassed, will answer, "No, my people are very poor."

"Why, my dear young man," the father continues, "do you not realize that you do not own even a decent coat, nor boots, nor a pair of haisen (trousers)? Indeed, you are almost barefoot, and in fact, naked. You cannot get married like that, and how will you procure

a kalo matones (bridal present) for your bride?"

Of course the young man sits there stupefied and bullied out of his senses. Then he tries to protest: "Why I had no intention of getting married! I did not look for a wife; I know I have nothing! That's why I am a yeshiva bocher. The schatchen told me you wanted me for a son-in-law, and I finally consented to see you."

"Well," the father will reply, "I didn't know you were that poor." (What a bluff!) "For a thousand rubles, you see, I can get a business man for my daughter. Such a girl as I have! She alone is a fortune. My family are all such fine people they will have nothing less than a finem ingil (a learned young man). And then my wife comes from rebonem (a family of rabbis), and she would not dream of permitting her daughter to marry any one who had no hopes of one day becoming a rabbi. But still, if the young man is learned, although not a rabbi, I will speak to her; I feel confident that she will be satisfied. A woman! Bah! I'll fix that all right. Young man," the father

will continue, stroking his beard with one hand and muttering "Hm, hm." "If that is the meisa (story), I'll tell you what I will do with you; -we will make a tnoim (engagement) right now-and I will fix you up. I will buy you two suits of clothes, a hat, three suits of underwear, two pairs of shoes," (the yeshiva bocher gets only one, by the way) "and I will give you a thousand rubles, a gold watch and chain, and the wedding shall be in three months." The father is rather in a hurry. His wife, he says, is in poor health and has to take the baths this season; so she would like to see the wedding before she goes away. (You ought to see the woman who is going to the baths "for her health!")

Finally the schatchen pulls a red hand-kerchief from his pocket and hands one end to the father, who touches it and says, "I give my blessing." Then the same end is given to the young man who also touches it. This little ceremony signifies that both parties have consented to the engagement. Then the schatchen rises quickly, the mistress of the house brings forth a bottle of schnapps and

congratulates them so graciously and delightfully, that no doubt is left in the mind of the yeshiva bocher that she is the future mother-in-law. She wears a doubled gold chain around her neck, as thick as a man's thumb, and at least a yard long. A pair of gold earrings hang down nearly to her shoulders, and she has on a gold brooch, as large almost as a small hand.

Who could resist the temptation of having such a mother-in-law, so decorated and all in gold! The young man goes away all smiles. He does not say a word to the other yeshiva bocherim. He is afraid they might say something against him, for his conscience feels guilty of little odds and ends in his past life. He is afraid that some jealous comrade will get ahead of him and tread his golden path. So he keeps his prospects quite a secret and goes around with a broad smile on his face, now and again laughing aloud. "Ah!" he says, "I am no more a yeshiva bocher. I am going to be a baalh'bos of this town. What a fine house they have, and what fine furniture!" He has never seen the girl, for he did not dare

ask such a privilege. He is engaged to be married in three months, and that is sufficient.

The schatchen sees him occasionally and whispers to him, "She is working a fine little tephilim sakel for you." (This a little velvet bag with his name worked in pearls, in which to carry his phylacteries and prayer-book). The yeshiva bocher laughs in gleeful anticipation, as he imagines himself walking to the beishamedres in the morning, dressed in his new suit, wearing his gold watch and chain and carrying the beautiful tephilim sakel, as he has seen other wealthy citizens do. He sees all the other veshiva bocherim looking at him. jealous of his good fortune; he will not deign to speak to any of them, but he will be proud and dignified, to pay them for the way they have treated him.

When the wedding day draws nigh, the schatchen reappears and says to the yeshiva bocher, "Do you know, I fear that some one has said something about you, for I have seen your father-in-law to-day and he seemed to be somewhat doubtful about you. Somebody has

told him that you are not as learned as he thought you were; and they say that your , father 'deals in horses.' Of course you know what that means." (In that part of Russia it is very certain that a Jew who "deals in horses" is the receiver of stolen property; for a small horse-trader must deal with the gypsies who are notorious for stealing horses This is about the worst thing one could say to the young man to scare him.) The schatchen takes advantage of the yeshiva bocher's fright, and delves deeper into other family details, until the young man feels that he has no business to aspire to decent society. And of course the schatchen, who is an expert in this sort of business, mercilessly flays the young man. After he has completely cowed him, he will say, "I'll tell you what I will do. I will go and see the machuteneste (the mother). She is a woman who has a great deal to say about the house, as she comes of a very fine family." And then he departs, with a hopeless shake of his head.

The poor yeshiva bocher is left in a fever of anxiety. All his beautiful castles are apparently

to be shattered, and seem about to collapse. He sees the schatchen walking off with long, sharp, business-like steps, and he heaves a deep sigh. Anxiously he awaits the return of the marriage broker in the evening. The schatchen comes, with a smile, and, greeting the unhappy yeshiva bocher, exclaims, as he warmly grasps the young man's hand: "Masiltof! (congratulations). It is all right now. But, remember, not a word to any one, as somebody might come again and spoil it, and I will not bother with it again. I have worked hard; you are not paying me anything now, and of course they are not paying anything. It is for you that I am working. I saw you, and I liked you; so I said to myself, 'here is a very fine and capable young man,-I am going to do something for him,' so please do not cause me any extra trouble."

At this the yeshiva bocher protests, and insists that he will pay him and pay him well, too, as soon as he is married and has the thousand rubles. But the wily schatchen replies, "No! no! I do not want any money. I wish to see that every young man who becomes a

citizen of the town is a baalh'bos. Do you suppose I am doing this for money? Oh, no!" (He knows only too well that he will receive nothing from the young man, but he is satisfied, for he will probably get ten rubles from the parents for dragging the young man from the MUD to the GUTTER.)

So the prospective bridegroom sleeps peacefully, and enjoys sweet dreams once more. He is generous that night, and allows his herd to enjoy themselves unmolested. He is happy, and wants all around him to be the same. In fancy he sees the girl. She is like her mother, and her mother is certainly a good-looking woman. He sees himself lounging, as did the father, on the sofa in the parlor. His wife is seated at the window engaged in some fancy work. He has just returned from Riga, where he has invested his thousand rubles in some dry goods, and also procured a credit for a thousand rubles. Two thousand rubles of dry goods will make a very imposing display in his store!

And now the servant is bringing in the samovar. A couple of young men, citizens, whom he had seen come to the *beishamedres* in a

proud and haughty manner, are sitting at his table, and he is talking to them in a confidential tone. He is speaking of his experiences at Riga—how he conversed with the wholesale people in so business-like a manner that they never for a moment imagined he was a yeshiva bocher. They were quite confident that he was the son of some wealthy man, and had been brought up in the dry-goods business. He bought well, and as the wholesale merchants desired his future trade, they gave him great bargains.

His father-in-law now enters the dining-room, and they all laugh and talk gaily. His friends pat him on the shoulder, just as if he were an old comrade and brother. His mother-in-law comes in smiling. She whispers something in her daughter's ear, who quickly gets up and goes out, immediately returning and looking very satisfied. The servant then comes and moves the *samovar* aside while all continue to chat and drink their tea. At one end of the table a *serviette* is spread; a plate, with a knife and fork, is laid upon it in true *baalh'bos* style. Then a whole loaf of bread is placed

upon the table! His wife comes over to him and says, "Yossel! Will you come and wash your hands now?" (Every good Jew, before taking a meal, pours water from a cup three times over each hand, and afterward, while drying them, says a short prayer.)

Smiling, he arises and gives his wife a look that conveys a great deal. He walks into the kitchen, washes his hands, dries them, and comes in again. He sits down at the head of the table (the place of honor) and, after another quiet prayer, cuts the loaf of bread and takes a bite. Ah!—After that bite he is permitted to speak. Every one has something funny to say; all are so merry and jovial. He drinks a little schnabbs and passes the bottle around the table. The servant brings in a little herring salad as an appetizer. Then he drinks some brandy again, and the bottle makes another tour of the table. He pours a little schnapps into a glass, beckons his wife over to him, and, with a wink, draws her close to him and whispers something in her ear. The young men declare that his lips touched her face. She blushes and protests that it is not so, but the others

will not have it otherwise; even the father-inlaw says he saw it. The mother-in-law is looking out of the window; she sees and hears nothing, feeling only the happiness of her daughter.

Ah! The servant enters again, and after clearing away the herring plates, brings in the roasted leg of a goose. (This is considered a great delicacy by the Russian Jews.) The wife has smoked it herself and then carefully baked it in the oven. It certainly tastes good, and he smacks his lips with a keen relish of its excellence; for, has not his young wife prepared it especially for him? He is eating, while the others are drinking. Oh, how happy and contented he is!

After benzen (the meal prayer) the table-cloth is removed and the samovar is replaced in the center of the table. The wife and his mother-in-law go to the table. They put charcoal in the chimney and fill the samovar with fresh, cold water. But it seems that the maid has allowed the fire to burn down too far for the new charcoal to ignite. He is thirsty and desires a glass of tea very much. As he is the young

bos, he calls the maid and tells her to take the samovar out to the kitchen; he follows her to see that it receives proper attention. The only way to make the fire burn is to blow into the chimney with the mouth to create a draught. The maid blows and blows, but without any success. So he, himself, bends down and begins to blow. As he does so, a spark from the fire flies out onto his forehead. He springs up and falls backward. The fall is so hard that he—AWAKES, and finds himself lying on the floor. He has fallen off the bench. Poor, poor yeshiva bocher; he was only dreaming!

He rises, still parched and thirsty, and looks about him. Although it is not time to get up, he cannot sleep any more. He sits down to review his dream, and promptly takes it as a prophetic omen. "Yes," he says, "I wish this marriage was over, so that I could get away from this horrible place." The bench seems to get harder as he sits on it. He has never before noted how dirty it all is; and he compares it with the beautiful apartment of his dream. How vulgar all his comrades are! They lie snoring on the benches, and floor.

Again he compares them with the associates of his dream, in his father-in-law's saal (parlor). He does not see how he can remain in such filthy surroundings much longer. Think of what a smart young man he was! How well he had bought those dry-goods! "Oh, how I wish it were daylight, that I could see the schatchen!" he murmurs.

The other yeshiva bocherim begin to move and dress. He looks at them with disgust and listens with loathing to their vile jokes. He cannot comprehend how it was possible that he could have enjoyed such jokes before. What a horrible and vile set they are! After they have dressed and "davnened" and gone out, he begins to feel hungry. The goose's drumstick of his dream is beating a call on his empty stomach. He quickly pulls on his torn and ragged shoes, his coat and trousers, puts on his cap, says a short prayer and goes in to davnen. To his delight he finds the schatchen there. Plucking up courage, the young man goes over to him and says, "Good morning, Reh Itzik. Sholom-Aleichem." (Peace be thine). The schatchen responds with a warm

shake of the hand, whispering, "I want to see you after davnen."

If God has never before been cheated in a prayer, he certainly is this morning by the poor yeshiva bocher. The ceremony is anything but devotional. He keeps his tephilim (phylacteries) on his head, also wound around his arms. His prayer-book is open, but his thoughts are far from it; he can only think, "Where is that schatchen going to take me, or what has he to tell me?" The dream is still fresh in his memory. Mechanically he goes through all the prayer movements; he mumbles, but does not say a word, nor does he know what he is doing. He is startled by hearing the schatchen say: "Well! Are you through?" and at the same time he finds himself winding up his tephilim as all the others are doing, and he places it under the bench in a box.

Automatically he goes out with the schatchen, who says, "Come along with me to a tailor and be measured for a suit." From there they go to the shoemaker where he is measured for shoes, and the schatchen then invites the

poor stupefied boy to his own home. A bottle of schnapps is placed on the table, and while his host takes a large portion, the young man is persuaded to take a small one (to benefit them both). The yeshiva bocher is not accustomed to a large glass of schnapps, and a little one will not hurt him—nor the bottle. The schatchen then begins a glowing description of the young man's future happiness. While he is painting the beautiful pictures, the young man's teeth are chattering from hunger. He timidly says, "I have missed my breakfast this morning." The schatchen asks, "Where is your 'day' to-day?" and being told he cheerfully says, "Oh, that is all right, I know those people very well; don't worry, I'll fix it up for you. I will see that they have an early dinner to-day, so you go there before the usual time."

Poor yeshiva bocher! Without a particle of food, he departs to the beishamedres, where he tries to while away a few hungry hours in study. But the schnapps has acted as an appetizer; and after trying vainly to interest himself in the book he eventually goes over to one of the

yeshiva bocherim and tries to borrow a pam (three groschen or a kopeck and a half). One refuses it, another hasn't it; and finally, by telling one that the house was closed when he arrived for breakfast, he manages to get a pam. He sends one of the younger boys out to buy a bulke (a large roll about three times as large as an ordinary roll in America), and with that bulke he goes into the women's part of the beishamedres and sandwiches it with the goose of his dream. Really it tastes fine!

In a short time he goes to dinner, and finds it better than usual. He sees that his hosts already understand that he is going to be one of the rich citizens, and he notices how respectful they are to him. Poor yeshiva bocher! It is only a delusion; but he eats his meal with keen satisfaction, wipes his whiskers on his coat-sleeve, and departs, a contented future haalh' hos.

## CHAPTER IV.

#### THE YESHIVA BOCHER'S WEDDING.

A WEEK passes. An old woman will be seen going from house to house, entering each without rapping. As she enters she says: "You are invited to the wedding of Reb Maise's daughter who is to be married to a yeshiva bocher; a vailen ingil." Some hand her a kopeck or a groschen (quarter of a cent), while others only grin significantly and ask, "When is the wedding?" She replies, "On Thursday, at Reb Avrom's." (A citizen who is willing to have this wild performance take place in his house.) She goes from house to house, repeating the same story and answering the same questions. Some will probably say, "I am glad that man is getting rid of his daughter! She is so homely; she is not smart. She is no longer young; in fact she is old, and oh, so short and thick! Why, I saw her last week and she seems older than her mother,

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and you know what a body her mother is! I am very glad indeed that the poor man is going to be rid of such a load!" The old woman, omitting no house, visits the rich and poor alike, inviting them all to the wedding.

Thus the invitations are arranged; and when the wedding takes place nearly everybody comes, for it is always a lively affair. There is sure to be music, no matter how poor the parents or the music may be; and, as balls are unknown in these towns, a wedding is considered a great treat, and, being an open affair, it gives the young people an opportunity to come together, to dance and be merry. The girls have their calico dresses washed and stiffly starched, and their hair done up in tight braids so that it will be well crimped the next day.

The night previous to the wedding, the bride is taken to the public bath. All the women being aware of this, suddenly find that they are very much in need of a bath also, and put in their appearance in time to take part, as actors or spectators, in the ceremony of "bathing the bride." The bath-room is long, with wooden steps built along one of the walls and extend-

ing almost to the ceiling, that the bathers may mount where the air is hottest. The fireplace is filled with red-hot stones over which an old woman attendant (the tukerke) throws buckets of water, until a dense cloud of steam fills the room. Every woman in the room is naked, for bath-robes are unknown among the Russian Jews. Some of them lie flat on the steps, and the tukerke comes along with a little broom, made of young bushes with large leaves, which she first dips into cold water, and then holds aloft in the steaming air so that the vapor may pass through it. Then she passes along the tiers of prone bathers and spanks each one with it. As a general joke everybody joins in spanking the bride, so there is usually a pretty lively time. Her torture is further increased by all manner of vulgar jokes, perpetrated at the bride's expense. Every woman asks her embarrassing questions and demands a reply; and if the poor bewildered girl refuses to answer. she is badgered all the more.

And now, the *tukerke* has another task to perform; a necessary, religious duty. She cuts the finger and toe nails of the bride, and

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being in a hurry she sometimes cuts so deeply that the poor girl has a sore toe or finger to nurse for weeks after the wedding. After she has been thoroughly scrubbed, and her hair has been washed and rinsed, she is taken to the mikvoh (plunge room). This is built on the style of the usual plunge in the Turkish baths, being a little below the level of the floor. The only difference is that in the Turkish bath the water is changed daily; whereas in the mikvoh it is changed but once a year, usually before Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). For the entire year, nearly every man and woman has plunged into this same water, weekly or monthly.

The bride is then led down the steps to the mikvoh, the tukerke accompanying her with a lighted candle in each hand, as a witness that the bride has been made kosher (holy). Standing in the water, the bride repeats the following prayer after the old woman: "Boruch atoh Adonoh, eleikeinu meilech hoeilum asher kidashonu bamizveisov veizivonu el tivilis mizvoh." (Blessed art Thou, O God, that Thou hast hallowed and ordained that we should

hallow ourselves through water.) Her hair has been loosened and is hanging down. She is obliged to plunge three times into that water, so deeply that even her hair must not remain on the surface. While her head is under water, and after each plunge, the old woman says "kosher." If one plunge does not seem satisfactorily executed, the bride must repeat it until the old woman is quite satisfied that all three plunges have been properly performed according to the laws of the Jewish religion. The bride is then permitted to dress and return to her home, where she will go behind the brick oven and cry.

Then her fast begins. Until she is married the next day, she is not permitted to drink even a glass of water; sometimes her mother will fast with her, often the father too. The bride has no duties to perform except to fast and cry. If she did not cry a great deal, she would be considered an idiot, for it is the custom for all brides to do considerable crying prior to the marriage. As if they were not to still more after it!

But what has the yeshiva bocher been doing

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on the morning of the wedding? First of all the schatchen takes him to have his hair cut. then to the bath; for the *choson* (bridegroom) usually manages to have three kopecks to pay for his bath. The schatchen carries a large red handkerchief tied up like a bundle, which contains a new suit of underwear and a red handkerchief. No starched collars are worn; the undershirt generally has a very broad, unstarched collar, and this flaps down over the handkerchief, which has been placed around the neck. Over the schatchen's arm hangs a new suit, and on the other arm he carries a new pair of boots and a new cap. Proudly he marches to the bath by the side of the young man, and every one lies in wait to see them pass. The men are as curious as the women; and at the bath a performance is gone through with the choson similar to the treatment of the bride by the women. Still, he has much less to suffer, as the nail cutting, the plunges and the prayers are dispensed with.

After the bath is over, the young man will dress up in his new underwear, his new suit and his new cap and creaking boots, after

which he will most likely cast a questioning glance at the schatchen, as much as to say, "Well, where is my watch? Where is my gold chain?" But he would not dare to ask outright for it, after having received all the new clothing. If only he had a brother or a father there, they might ask for it! Nevertheless he does not forget that the watch and chain have been promised him. The schatchen has seen his glance, and whispers, "Ah, there is such a fine gold watch and chain for you. You will receive it this afternoon." With this assurance the poor yeshiva bocher already feels it in his pocket.

Usually the shoes are purposely made to creak loudly, and as he walks, the young man blushingly hangs his head, as each step betrays his errand. He, too, is fasting; but he does not find it so very difficult, for fasting is no new experience to him.

He is then taken to the citizen's borrowed house, where a room has been prepared for the groom and the men, as one has been for the bride and the women. In this room all the men, old and young, are gathered around

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a table, drinking schnapps and telling tales. If there are any relatives of the groom present, one of these will most likely say to the fatherin-law: "How about that thousand rubles?" And the father-in-law will reply, "A thousand rubles? Ah, yes! But I have had a very bad year, and I am afraid I can give you only five hundred." "What!" they will exclaim, "Only five hundred? Why, you promised a thousand." And the young man's relations will try and persuade him to go home, saying, "Why, a thousand rubles have been promised you. You surely are not going to marry a miserable five hundred? A bright young fellow like you, can easily get ten thousand." "No, you don't," chimes in the father-in-law; "No fear! No doubt but what you could get a great deal of money now, after I have taken you out of that filthy condition. Who looked at you before? You miserable, half-starved veshiva bocher! It was I who made a man of you. Look at yourself now! You look like a real baalh'bos. How did you look this morning?"

Poor yeshiva bocher! He sits there, fright-

ened to death lest this misunderstanding dissolve the engagement, and he may have to take off his new, proudly-creaking boots and his brand-new suit. He begins to wonder whether the bath-house is closed or not, whether he will be able to get his old clothes back. Personally, he is content with less money, provided he may retain his new outfit. If the young man has no relatives present, the schatchen manages to make himself scarce; for he has learned from long experience that the first thing the young man will ask for is the watch and chain.

Sometimes the money affair will be arranged in this way: The father-in-law says he will give the young man five hundred rubles and kest (board for the young man and his wife), in lieu of the additional five hundred rubles. In pledge of this the father-in-law gives the young man his hand before witnesses, and the young man's friends are satisfied. Or again the father-in-law may say, "Oh, the money is all right! It is safely deposited with a friend of mine. The watch? Ah, true! Hmmmmm! Laibele, come here to me. Go and ask mamma

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what she has done with the watch and chain?" After a lapse of an hour or two the boy will return and say, "Mamma says she has put it under the pillows at home, for safety's sake;" and another young man is sent off for it. While the money question is being settled, and the watch hunt is in progress, the hours slip by. Sometimes the bride's father will give the yeshiva bocher a receipt for the money which has been deposited with a friend; but the young man usually finds that, when he presents the receipt to get the money, the sly fox has been there ahead of him and taken it away.

Meanwhile the ceremony has begun. The musicians are there and the whole town has turned out for the occasion. There is loud calling for the bride, and one of the girls will go to seek her, to return with the message that she is dressing. While they are waiting the music plays and the girls dance together, for the young men are not allowed to dance;—in fact no young man is to be seen in the wedding room except the musicians. Every girl that pays three kopecks to the musicians will

be permitted to have one dance, and the more money a girl has, the more she will enjoy herself.

Suddenly the cry arises, "The bride is coming! The bride is coming!" and the musicians will immediately go outside and play their most dismal music, as a welcome to the bride. Accompanied by a few older married women, she enters the wedding room, dressed in her black silk dress, her mother by her side. Seating herself at one end of the room, with some married women around her, she remains seated while the dances proceed.

At last the women begin to tire of the dancing. A chair is placed in the center of the floor, and as soon as the bride sees this move, she covers her face with her handkerchief and begins to sob and cry aloud. The two unterfihrerkes (bridesmaids, generally married women), lead her to the center of the room and seat her on the chair. The bride's hair is loosened and let down; then a saucer of sugar and water is brought over, and every woman dips her finger in it and smears it over the bride's head. About two yards of coarse

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white sewing thread are next brought in and her hair is tied up in little knots. While this is in progress, two other women loosen the bands of her petticoats and skirts, untie her shoes, take down her garters, and open her bodice. The two women then take their stand on either side of the bride, one holding close to her forehead a plate of fine *lekach* (gingerbread crumbs), over which a red silk handkerchief has been carelessly thrown. Word is then sent to the men that the bride is ready.

If fate is kind, the financial question has been settled by this time, and the young man, accompanied by his fellow-citizens, will come to the wedding room. As he nears the room, every one cries, "The choson is coming! The choson is coming!" and the women separate to make room for the groom and his following. When the young man comes in with his crowd, (he has not seen the bride yet, nor does he see her now, for her head is bowed to her breast), he can only hear his future companion sobbing and crying pitifully. Indeed everybody cries. Then the groom takes one end of the handkerchief that lies over the plate, the

husbands of the *unterfihrerkes* take the other ends, and together, they quickly lift it up and throw it over the bride's head. Just as soon as this is done, all the women rush madly for the plate, grab handfuls of the gingerbread crumbs and throw them at the bridegroom and the men, who dash for the door and then proceed to the synagogue.

It is very often the case that the bride has fainted from the day's fast, from the heat of the room, from her crying, and from all that she has gone through; but there is no mercy among these savages. They will not allow the least opportunity for torturing the bride to slip by. They must amuse themselves.

In front of the synagogue four men hold a huppa, or canopy on four posts, under which the groom awaits the bridal procession. Two women hurriedly lift the bride from the chair and march her to the synagogue, supported on either side by the unterfihrerkes (bridesmaids), for she is a pitiful sight. Her stockings are hanging down, her shoes are open, and the strings trail on the ground. She drags herself along, supporting her loosened skirts with

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both hands, the red handkerchief tied to her head and hanging down over her face. The entire crowd of women follow until they reach the synagogue.

While the rabbi is engaged in a little ceremony, the bride and the women all stand a little to one side. When the word is given she is taken under the canopy, and to the singing and praying of the entire congregation, she solemnly marches thrice around the groom. who stands in the center. At the end of the third round she stops in front of him, and a bridesmaid lifts her right hand, the forefinger of which is pointed at the groom. He takes a ring (or a silver coin) and places it on the finger, saying as he does so: "Hari at meikudeshes le beitabas su ceidas Meises vei Ishroel" (For truth you are prepared to me with this ring, according to the law of Moses and Israel."

These words are used as a most solemn marriage bond; and without the ring (or the coin) the marriage would not be legal. As soon as he has said them, every one cries out "Masiltof;" and if you were to glance at the

father-in-law at that moment, you would see how he swells out his chest and heaves a deep sigh of relief.

Next the rabbi will say a prayer over a glass of wine, from which he takes a small sip, and hands it to the young husband, who drains the contents, throws the empty glass on the floor, and crushes it under the heel of those powerful new boots.

Now the whole procession sets out for the real home of the father-in-law. One of the women takes from beneath her shawl a very large round flat gingerbread, called the kalo lekach (wedding cake), which is as hard as the very hardest of ginger cake. Another woman, usually a machuteneste (near relative, or close friend), takes this cake with one hand while she holds her skirts together with the other; and raising the kalo lekach as high above her head as she can reach, she dances constantly in a circle before the advancing bride, (whose face is still covered), singing as she does so: "Kalo lekach! Kalo lekach!" Some of the other married women carry lighted candles and succeed in marring the festivities by

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spoiling many a silk dress with the drippings; others clap their hands in time to the singing, all the while marching on. When one has danced about a dozen turns, another will spring suddenly forward and, forcing the cake from the other's hand, will continue the dance herself. Thus it goes on. The cake is changed from hand to hand, the women hop, the procession proceeds, the music plays, and at last they reach the *real* home of the bride.

When they arrive the young man is amazed. He cannot comprehend why the wedding feast should take place in such a tumble-down old shanty. But, of course he is hungry and tired, and he has not yet received his watch and chain, nor the money. Why? He fears to ask the question. As soon as he is seated at the table beside his bride, whose face he has not yet seen, chicken broth, (called golderne yaichelle), is served specially for the young couple. After he has taken a few spoonfuls of it, a sudden thought enters his head: "Did not my bride appear to be rather short under the canopy? I had to look down upon her when I placed the ring on her finger." But 5

this is only a momentary thought, quickly dismissed when schnapps is served.

A little old starved-looking woman is hovering around him, and it gradually dawns upon him that this is the real mother-in-law. But where is the gracious lady whom he saw on the day of the engagement and has never seen since? This woman, not only is she devoid of a gold chain around her neck and a beautiful brooch, but she is wearing a shabby old dress that may have served thirty-five years ago as her wedding gown, and is now her only Sabbath garment! Frightened and shocked, he looks at his father-in-law. Yes, that is the same coat he wore on the engagement day! It might have been black once, but it is green and glossy now; and, judging from the wedding feast, he begins to feel that the outlook for his promised three years' board and lodging is not very encouraging. Still, as he is not an over-conscientious yeshiva bocher, he consoles himself with the thought: "If I find that the bride is not pretty, and the board is not good, why, I will take the five hundred rubles and go to America and leave the old

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man his daughter." With these consolations for the future he strengthens his weak heart and fills his empty stomach with the wedding feast.

The bride has also eaten; and being satisfied both in body and soul, the kosher (holy) dance begins. When the family is very poor and the crowd small, the kosher dance and the wedding present dance are combined. Otherwise they are given separately, that the batchen, (a joking master of the dance), may get more money out of the assembled guests.

The bride is left standing in the center of the room where the men and women now mingle together and seem to be trying to conceal something in the folds of their dresses, or in their coat-tails. The joker, or batchen, stands in a corner and, one by one, calls upon the honorary guests and nearest relatives of the bridegroom and the bride, and then upon the dearest friends and neighbors of both, to come forward and dance with the bride. As he calls upon each in turn, he improvises some rhyming joke upon the name of the person, who then comes forward, bearing a wedding

present so conspicuously that all may see it, and, stepping to the side of the bride, the person so called whirls her about in unison with the music.

The presents are laid on the table; and the joker, while collecting his coins from each dancer, calls on another and another, all the while rhyming and joking with spontaneous but cheap wit upon the name of each guest, to the hilarious enjoyment of the crowd, until all who have presents to give and a coin to spend have had a dance with the bride. This poor mortal receives some pretty hard swings during the wedding-present dance, which, added to her previous fasting and other tortures, keep her on the verge of collapse. But what does that matter? The more the merrier, and the merrier, the more presents.

Finally a woman edges up to the bride and "digs" her in the side, saying at the same time: "Come outside, I want to see you a minute." The bride follows to another room where a wig-maker, generally a woman, awaits her with a pair of scissors in her hand. In a few moments the bride's long hair is clipped

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off, so closely that you would imagine she had been shaved. A little black calico cap is tied on her head, and, with a ruble and a bunch of hair, an exchange is made for a wig for the bride, to be put on the following morning. The poor creature, in her natural state might be a blonde; but the next day she is quite likely to appear with a *jet-black* wig, for these are called *chinison hor* (china hair), the cheapest kind possible.

From the wig-maker the bride is led to the bridal chamber, which is quite often in a barn. She is undressed, and no less than twenty women participate in this torture. All that takes place in that room is of the same order of cheap wit that characterizes the ceremony of the bath. They badger the bride and insult her with all manner of vulgar jokes, until finally exhausted, she drops into bed. Her nose is red, her eyes are swollen, her hair is clipped off, a black cap is tied on her head;—she has been made *kosher*. In this picturesque condition, the bride awaits her lord.

While the kalo is being prepared to receive her husband in the bridal "barn," the crowd

amuses itself with teasing the *choson*. He is told that some one wants to see him on business. He replies that his business just then is his wedding, at which every one laughs and applauds him for his wit. They find it exceedingly difficult to fool him into the bridal apartment, however, so they all begin to sing,

"That's the way, that's the way,
We fool the *choson*;
We promise lots of money,
But we give him not a groschen."

Poor fellow! He thinks they are merely joking: but the crowd and the parents know it is the truth.

Finally they get him in the center of the room and dance him around and around. They drag him here and drag him there, and gradually lead him toward the bridal chamber, where some unseen hand opens the door and he is literally "fired" in. Then it is closed and barred on the outside; and while the crowd gives itself up to merriment and dancing, he stands there contemplating his wife by the light of one small candle. He notes the black cap. Well, that is all right, for he has

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seen his mother wearing one. He sees her red and swollen eyes. Well, that is all right, she has been crying. He looks at her red nose. Well, that is all right too. That would be caused by the crying. "But, I don't know," he says to himself, "it seems to me she is homely in general. She doesn't look like the young girls I have seen, but more like an old woman. Well, what do I care anyhow? It's dark now; maybe she'll look better in the morning." Finally the young man undresses, and with one eye on his new suit and the other on his new pair of boots, he retires.

In the morning, when he arises, the poor yeshiva bocher is received with a smile by his father-in-law, who scratches his beard and says: "I am sorry, but I am unable to find your watch." The yeshiva bocher looks at his wife. He would like to run off to America, but alas! the five hundred rubles are still forthcoming. The father-in-law tells a hard luck story and explains that the five hundred rubles are impossible. The yeshiva bocher takes the tephilim and goes to the beishamedres. His comrades wait for him and greet

him with a shout of laughter. For a pair of new boots and a suit of clothes he has taken a homely old-maid daughter off the hands of an old Jew, whose poverty is a byword! So he continues his studies, or lies around the beishamedres lazily, just as he chooses, while his wife sells fresh baked bread, matches and soap. His life has changed. Before his marriage he had many "days," and nothing to eat; now he has little to eat on many days. But oh, that thousand rubles and the trip to Riga!

Poor, poor yeshiva bocher!

### CHAPTER V.

### THE WEDDING.

On the Friday night before my wedding, I stole to Reb Schmia's yard, and the servant was kind enough to let me look through the window at their Sabbath, the man who was to be my husband in a few days. I was obliged to do this very secretly, for if any one discovered that I dared do such a thing I would have been pointed out as a bold and forward character. After I had seen the Sabbath, I hurried home. Yeshiva bochers all looked disgustingly alike to me, but what could I do but cry again. I cried all night and most of the next day; so in the morning my eyes were swollen from weeping. My mother was well pleased, however, for she remarked to the other women in the house:

"Minke has got good sense. She has been crying all night, and her eyes are all swollen. Oh! she will make a fine kalo! She is cry-

ing all the time. Why, if she were eighteen she could not cry any more."

I listened as my mother talked with the women regarding the arrangements for the wedding. They decided unhesitatingly that the ceremony should be carried out to its fullest extent, without any consideration for my youth;—I was only thirteen. Overwhelmed with a sense of approaching calamity I ran to the next house, to the postmaster's wife, who had married a Christian, and, throwing my arms about her neck, cried most bitterly.

"Well, my girl," she said, "you will not listen to me, how can I help you?"

I kissed her passionately. "No, no," I cried, "I must not, I must not!" and ran back to my mother's house, determined to wait and see what the future might bring forth.

My mother met me at the door. "The day before her wedding," she screamed, "a kalo runs around? And where were you? At the postmistress's? Na, thank God, I will soon be rid of the zorus (trouble)! Did you go to complain to the Christians that something does not suit you? Poor yeshiva bocher," she

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continued, "if he knew what he is getting he would himself hang. Nobody knows what I held out with such a *drab* (lazy, shiftless girl). I tell you again your complaining will not help you. You are mine, not the postmistress's. All diseases from all the Jews of this town on her!"

Having spent something of her wrath upon the postmistress, she turned upon me again, but in a lower tone.

"Gott in Himmel!" she said, "Go and get dressed. It is late. You don't need to wait till it's dark to go to the mikvoh. If you are old enough to be ashamed, you are old enough to go by daylight. I cannot spend all night there and I have nobody to help me with the work. You are a geswollene kalo (swelled-up bride), but I have to do all the work myself. I want to get through early; there is such a lot of work to do for your farslepenes (a slang word for wedding). And the thanks I am getting!"

There seemed to be no end to her vituperations, for again her wrath burst forth in a scream.

"Another day and I will be rid of you. It is a shame and a sin to bury a young rabbi with such a beast! Go and get dressed or I will hand you a couple of slaps that your eyes will go over. I will give them to you right now and I will give them to you after you are married."

With this burst her wrath was apparently expended. I went to the bath where the ceremony of the *mikvoh*, with all its insulting details, was thoroughly carried out. On my return my mother placed a locket and chain around my neck, saying as she did so: "There, no one can say I failed to keep my word."

The next day I was married and went through the humiliating torture every whit. In the morning when I arose I did not cry. I took a slice of bread and a cup of coffee for my breakfast, but my mother sprang forward and knocked them from my hands.

"What! Eating to-day!" she shouted. "Are you crazy? Na! What do you think of that?" she screamed to the curiosity seekers who fill the home of the bride from

## The Wedding.

early morning till the wedding begins. "If the choson finds it out he will never go to the huppa (wedding canopy.) Na! What does she need to fast for a happy married life? She plagues me now, she will plague him after she is married."

Turning upon me, she shook her fist in my face. "I will lay you in the earth if you will not behave after the wedding and will make him ashamed. 'I will have an early wedding," I said. I intended to make a short day for you. 'Na!' I said to myself, 'she is young, I will get through with the wedding early and she will not have to fast so late at night.' But now, a disease, a plague on you! I will tell the tukerke, and the shammeste to give you a wedding day to-day that you will not forget as long as you live."

She kept her word.

My black silk dress was large enough to fit a woman at least a foot taller than I; and she might have been comfortable in it were she double my weight. I was only a child after all and protested. It dragged and hung on me.

"Na! What do you think of such a trouble?" exclaimed my mother to the other women. "See! See for yourself! That is the thanks I receive. I spared no expense. I knew she will grow yet, so I made it to last her lifetime. Na! Gott! I wish it was not so late, I would break your bones, my kalo, that I would have to wrap you in rags instead of a silk dress."

Amid a torrent of such promises, I was finally dressed and hurried to the wedding-room. The room was large and stripped of all furniture except a few chairs placed along the walls. Only a few children had arrived, who stood gaping at me and the two old women who accompanied me. Oh, how lonely I felt! How desolated the whole world looked to me!

The musicians had already arrived and begun to play. I felt as though some Great Judge had condemned me alive in a coffin and a funeral march was whining an accompaniment for my progress into hell. My mother had said I was wicked, and I was reconciled to this change.

## The Wedding.

Through the whole inhuman performance, even when my hair, the only decoration I ever possessed, was clipped, I did not know, I did not feel. Everything passed by me; I was as though in a trance. Finally they led me to the synagogue. No innocent man or desperate criminal ever faced the gallows with greater fright than I my wedding canopy. I hated the yeshiva bochers, I was lost;—the wedding ring was on my finger.

The whole procession returned, singing and dancing, to the house. There, not the least of my tortures was the wedding-present dance. They pushed me, they whirled me and humiliated me, until some women, more compassionate than the others, called out: "Enough, enough! Take the bride to the bridal chamber, she is only a child after all."

A crowd of married women followed; nor did they leave me to rest until I had fallen in a stupor in my bed, clipped and shorn, tortured, plagued and torn. I lay for a time listening to the insatiable wolves as they plagued him in the next room. Him? Who is he? God knew, but I did not.

Tired with weeping, I fell asleep.

At three o'clock in the morning after my wedding, while my husband was sleeping soundly, I opened the window carefully, climbed out quietly and clambered over the high fence into the postmaster's garden. I gently tapped on the window, and to my surprise, the postmaster himself opened it and called out:

"Wait, Minna; I will open the door for you in a moment."

He came out and taking me by the hand led me into his wife's apartment. "Here is Minna;" he said, "do all you can for her. I will go out and quiet the dogs."

Like an affectionate sister, the woman embraced me and taking me in her arms, laid me gently in her bed and covered me up, for I was shivering from cold and fear.

"Why, Minna, what is that you have round your neck?" she asked.

"Nothing," I answered, "except a little chain and locket that my mother put there when I came from the bath."

"Does it open?" she asked.

# The Wedding.

"Really, I don't know," I answered.

"Perhaps it does, let me see. It may possibly contain something of value to you."

I unfastened the locket and handed it to her. She examined it carefully and said, "It seems to be solid, still, I think it may be opened. Wait, we will see."

She tapped on the window and beckoned to her husband. As he entered the room, she exclaimed, "Don't you think this could be opened? Try it."

He took his pocket-knife and, after fumbling with the locket a moment or so, got it open, and to my surprise revealed a fine, silky, neatly folded paper. Opening it, he handed it to his wife. "It is written in Hebrew;" he said, "you had better read it." I sat up in bed and looked at them, I could not comprehend what was going on around me.

"Wait, child," said the postmistress. "We must first find out what this sheet of paper says, then I may be able to tell you something," and she read as follows:

<sup>&</sup>quot;My dear child;—Your birth is a secret. I, your mother, 6

am writing these lines while holding you in my arm, close to my breast. My poor infant, you are the child of the man I love dearly. Those fanatics, my religious parents, are going to tear you away from me in a few moments. One more kiss, and one more glance at your beautiful face. It is not you alone, my child, that they are separating from me, it is the very life they are tearing out of my poor sick body. I would be willing to live among these peasants and raise you, my darling, as a mother should bring up her child, if only I might keep you next my sore heart, as that alone is the only balm for my wounded soul. But no! no! My pleadings are of no avail, and they will soon take you away from me. So in the greatest haste I must tell you that your father was of noble birth and a Christian, while I am a Jewess. Love your mother, my child, and have pity. It is not my fault that we are separated. May God help and protect you, for I swear to you that I shall never be the mother of another child, nor the wife of another man."

The signature had been written in such haste, that it was impossible to decipher it. For a moment we looked at each other. The postmistress came over and kissed me, while her husband quietly left the room.

"My child," she said, "now will you listen to me? There has always been a rumor in town that you were not of the people you lived with. Since this is clear, do you propose remaining with them? Are you going to continue your life with the man to whom you were married yesterday?"

## The Wedding.

"It is too late, too late!" I said. "God knows it was not my wish to be married, and to a yeshiva bocher. It was my pretended parents and the customs of their people that forced me into it. Woe to me, woe to me, my dear friend! Would I had listened to you sooner! Now,—now I am lost, and lost forever!"

"You are not lost. You must not talk so, my child. The Lord knows your innocent suffering and will help you. He will send some kind people who will befriend you. But first of all you must leave here as soon as possible. It is not too late. You must go at once."

"But what will the people say?" I asked.

"You have nothing to fear. You are lawfully married and the whole town is witness to that."

Sobbing, I could only reply, "I will do all you tell me. God help me! Oh, my poor mother, how she must have suffered!"

The postmistress took up a whistle and blew several blasts. Leaning out of the windowshe called, "John, John!"

"Yes," her husband replied, "John is here, we are ready."

His wife went to the wardrobe, took out linen and clothes and dressed me, as if I had been an infant. I was helpless, and realized that I was alone in the world. What was I to do, and where was I going? I am married, but I leave my husband behind—a man to whom I have never spoken. Perhaps he, poor man, may have to suffer disgrace in the morning, when the ignorant Jews learn of my flight. He alone must pay the penalty and bear the shame. But I—I must go! If I can only find my mother, or my father! Who, indeed, are they? And who am I?

"It is queer," the postmistress said while she was dressing me, "that my husband can go simply by his instinct and seldom make a mistake. From the day you were engaged until now, I could see that man suffer as if he were your own father. I think it would have taken only a word last night to make him call all the surrounding peasants and take you by force from that wedding room. He never laid his head on a pillow. He sat here on this

## The Wedding.

chair by the window all night; and when I asked him why he did not retire, his answer was, 'She will be here soon; that is as far as they can go with her.' He was not a bit surprised when he heard the dogs bark.

"Those Jews hate him because he is a Christian and married a Jewess" she went on; "but if they only knew it, my husband is the best friend they have in town. When he is cross with them it is only because he cannot bear their old superstition and fanaticism. But, my dear, don't worry. My husband is a good man and he will help you out of this place. Do everything just as he tells you and you will be all right."

So, dressed in the postmistress' clothes, I kissed her good-by and started with her husband on my journey to Hamburg where her sister lived, it being decided that I should go as far as possible from my husband and his family. The postmistress, having married a Christian, was hated by the Jews in town; nor, indeed, had she been wholly forgiven by her sister who had married a Hamburg citizen of her own faith.

# CHAPTER VI.

#### AT HAMBURG.

The postmaster accompanied me all the way to Hamburg and took me to the home of his sister-in-law. A cold chill passed over me when I saw how displeased she was at the visit of her Christian relative. When she was made aware of his errand she at first refused absolutely to admit me to her house; but when the postmaster explained that there were no parents who would seek me or bother her, she consented to let me stay if I would do the housework.

"Of course I cannot pay her anything," she said, "but I will give her a home as long as possible. You know the law in Hamburg, that Russian Jews cannot live here."

Being assured that I would at least have a home, and knowing he could do no better for me, the postmaster finally left for his journey home. When he had gone I could not speak

# At Hamburg.

from crying. He was the only friend I had on earth except his wife, but they in my estimation were one. I could not bear the thought of being separated from them and left alone.

Finally, Frau Nathanson led me to my room. I froze to the ground when I entered. It was absolutely without a window and dark and damp. It was filled with trunks and baskets. In one corner lay a pile of soiled linen, and in another was an old couch with a dirty mattress on which lay a servant—an ignorant, oily, greasy Polak. My mistress informed me that this servant was about to emigrate to America and that I would take her place.

I slaved for this woman for months as a servant, working early and late, with only a damp and dirty room to go to as a refuge after my daily toil. Time dragged slowly until one day a new dilemma presented itself—I was about to become a mother.

My mistress made the discovery and explained it to me. I could not comprehend all she told me, but having no one else to turn to in my difficulty I was compelled to rely upon her for advice. She rose to the occasion with

a philosophic calm to which I had previously thought her a stranger: and after a time succeeded in having me admitted as a charity patient in one of the Hamburg hospitals.

And fortunate it was that she did. The watchful care and kind attention bestowed upon me made that place seem as an oasis to a tired traveler, especially to me who had suffered so much at the hands of my people and slaved so long at domestic drudgery. An American doctor who was "walking" the Hamburg hospitals as a part of his foreign medical education, heard the story of my enforced marriage and sudden flight and "admired my courage," no less than he pitied my condition. He devoted his skill and attention to the "Little Jewish Madonna" and it was to him that I and my child owed our lives.

Yet there seems to be some strange fatality in the lives of some of us, that withholds the full enjoyment of perfect peace; and I was destined soon to waken from my dream to find that again I must go out into the world.

One morning I was seated before the win-

# At Hamburg.

dow in an easy-chair, dressed in a pretty teagown. The nurse was dressing my baby near by, and turning to me rather abruptly, she asked:

"What have you decided to do? Are you going to keep the little fellow, or do you intend to give him away?"

"I am going to keep my child," I replied quickly, "and if you will have the kindness to write a few words to the woman for whom I worked, and ask her to call for me, I would be very grateful to you."

"You headstrong little vixen!" said the nurse. "Aren't you going to take my advice? The doctor from America is in love with you. He is a fine man and wants to send you to his mother in America. He will have you educated and will marry you, I am sure. You could keep your boy then and he will be well provided for."

"I cannot marry him because I am already married."

The nurse turned away for a moment and laughed:

"Yes; so the people say where you worked,"

she said. "Dr. Leiter has been to see them several times. You foolish woman! I assure you that many girls in Hamburg would be proud of the offer. Those American doctors are rich and good-hearted, too. I am afraid you will be sorry some day. How beautifully you could raise your boy in such circumstances. You are foolish. Take my advice and go to America."

"Will you please write the letter?" I asked.

"If it cannot be otherwise I will write it, but to my greatest regret. I would like to see you happy with the Doctor."

The letter was finally sent; but when my nurse returned, she again took up the subject.

"Don't you think you are acting ungratefully in leaving before Doctor Leiter comes?" she asked. "I think you ought to wait until he arrives. Just think what he has done for you! Why, he has provided the finest private room in this hospital for you, and if it were not for the very best of wines which he procured specially for you, I am certain that you would not now be on your feet. You've been very ill. Those beautiful flowers that arrived for

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you every day cost a great deal. And are you not even going to thank him for all that?"

"Why has Dr. Leiter done all this for me?" I asked.

"Do you suppose the hospital cares for all their charity patients as you have been treated?" she replied. "Do you think they provide the lace dresses your baby wears?"

"Why, I supposed the woman for whom I have been working provided them for me."

"The woman for whom you worked? Hmm, very likely. You would not have been here so long had you been dependent upon her. Dr. Leiter has done all this for you."

"Well, Dr. Leiter had no right to do it without first speaking to me," I said warmly. "I am a poor girl and unable to repay him for all his kindness. I intend to go away, and right now, too, and without seeing him; so please give me the old clothes I came in. I shall not wait for my mistress to come for me."

"You cannot leave this hospital without your discharge," the nurse informed me; "and you do not need to wear those old

clothes. You should see the beautiful dresses Dr. Leiter has purchased for you."

"Did you not say you are my nurse and to wait on me only?"

"Yes. I am to wait on you only—for Dr. Leiter pays for it all."

"Then do as I tell you. Go to the superintendent and ask for my discharge; also bring my clothes—the old ones I arrived in. Please don't stand there and look at me in that manner, but go and do as I say. I wish you would get ready also and accompany me to the house."

Seeing that further remonstrance was useless, the nurse left me. I took my baby in my arms and kissed him passionately. I talked wildly to him as if he could understand.

"My darling," I sobbed, "if I refuse a grand home it is because I am young and strong and can work hard to provide a home for you by honest labor. I am your mother and ready to make any sacrifice for your sake. Forgive me, forgive me, if I am doing wrong."

My boy gave me a little smile in response. It was his first smile and I, his young mother,

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imagined that he really understood all I had said. Poor, ignorant girl though I was, I felt I could face the whole world and conquer it in the power of that smile.

It was hard to leave a place where so much kindness had been shown me,—such kindness as I had never known in my life; but there was that within me which bade me go back to my place and leave this doctor who filled me with an overwhelming sense of gratitude, but whose love I felt I could not return. In a few minutes the nurse came back with my discharge. Dressing quickly, I pressed my darling boy to my breast and was soon threading my way back to Frau Nathanson's to take up my old labors.

As the months rolled by and I grew in wisdom and knowledge of the world, I came to realize that I was not where I should be; that the life I was leading held no future for me or my boy. He was growing rapidly and my constant thought was for his future welfare; but when I saw how affectionately the family treated him, including Frau Nathanson, I half determined to continue my slavery for his

sake. I knew they loved him. He had a home. To go away might be to fare worse.

So, torn between the desire to make things better and the fear that they might be worse, I worked on in my indecision until one morning I came downstairs and confronted a constable who had handed a paper to Frau Nathanson and another to me. We knew only too well what its purport was—another summons to court for her and more trouble for me.

"This is becoming serious, my child," said Frau Nathanson, "and I am afraid you will have to leave. I really do not know where I can send you. We have avoided this as long as possible, and Herr Nathanson has spent much money to conceal your whereabouts from the police. Some one has big eyes and finds nothing else to do but make reports. I am sure there is nothing dummer than the police in Hamburg; and you might have been here for ten years, they would never have noticed you. But there are all kinds of people, and why they should report you, I am unable to comprehend.

"At any rate," she went on, "don't worry;

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we won't set you out in the street. I will talk it over with Herr Nathanson. I think that London would be the most advisable place for you to go. He has acquaintances there and he will try to locate them for you. I am sure that when he promises the court you will leave, they will grant you a few days to prepare for the journey. You had better go and look up your child's clothes and get your own in shape. You don't know how we will miss the boy. We have learned to love him as our own. Poor Dafit!"

I could not speak. I went upstairs and looked at my baby who lay asleep and little dreamed how homeless he was.

"Yes, darling, we must go," I said aloud. "And why—I don't know. What harm have I done here in this city of Hamburg? I slaved that I might have a home for you. I received no money—I worked very hard. I did not complain when I found no time during the day to devote to you, my poor child. I had a home—such as it was. The people were good to you; now I must go. And why? I am a Jewess. Oh, my God, mother! Is it

possible that this was all you could give me the name Jewess? Is that the only blessing your motherly sympathy could bestow upon me?

"Yes, I am a Jewess,—a hunted Jewess. In Russia the Jews have no home. I have less than any of them. They are persecuted and I am abused and humiliated. Here in Hamburg, because I am a Jewess, I am not allowed to stay. The law forbids a Russian Jewess to reside in Hamburg! Where shall I go! I do not know.

"Oh, mother!" I cried. "You said in your letter that my father was a Christian and of noble birth. Where is he now when his child is in great need? Were I alone it might not be so hard; but with my dear boy! Where shall I turn? Where shall I go and what shall I do in the future? Law? Yes, law! What is the law? And who has made it? And what kind of men can they be who make such laws that drive a lonely girl with an infant from her home? Shame to such a country—that produces and enforces such laws!"

## At Hamburg.

My boy opened his eyes; and when he saw me weeping, he arose in his bed, and putting his chubby arms about my neck kissed me and cried with me.

The next day, when Herr Nathanson returned from court, he brought strict orders that I must be gone within twenty-four hours, or he would be heavily fined and I would be sent back to Russia. So in the evening Frau Nathanson took me to the steamer and bade me farewell, giving me a letter of recommendation to a Jewish family in the Ghetto of London.

After a stormy voyage, we landed safely on a dark and foggy day. A stranger in a strange land, a baby in my arms, I eventually reached the house of the Jewish family in Petticoat Lane to whom my letter of recommendation was addressed. Although very poor they received me with the friendly courtesy peculiar to their race and bustled about to make a place for the "veibele (little woman) and her baby."

In the evening we sat down to partake of a frugal meal. Little by little their kindly questionings drew from me the story of my expe-

riences from the day when the man I had always called "father" came in with the neverto-be forgotten words: "Masiltof, Minke! You are a kalo and to a yeshiva bocher!" My new found friends listened to the story and cheered me with assurances that I would soon be able to earn a guinea a week in the shops. Under the influence of their friendly chatter, I came to feel that the sun was at last beginning to shine, and the clouds which had lowered about me all the days of my life were beginning to lift.

Bed-time came at last and I lay down beside my boy and fell asleep to dream of sunshine and flowers and peace.

### CHAPTER VII.

#### FROM PILLAR TO POST.

But the rude awakening from my dream of sunshine and peace came almost with the dawn; for it is always the unexpected that happens, and in my life at least that unexpected seemed always to happen ahead of time. Hardly had I descended from the tiny and illy-ventilated room where my new-found friends had made a place for me and my baby to sleep, when the hard hand of Fate was again laid heavily upon me. There before my very eyes was the only mother I had ever known, rushing toward me, waving her arms frantically and screaming in Hebrew at the top of her voice:

"Ah! There you are! So you're the nice veibele with the dear little boy that everybody saw come here yesterday! Na! If they only

knew you as well as I do, they would sing another song in the Lane about you soon."

Her screaming brought the family from the next room; and turning to them, my pretended mother continued, still screaming:

"This is the beautiful daughter I have been telling you about, who ran away from us and brought all the trouble that drove us out of Russia. That's the one. What do you say to that?

She apparently expected no reply to her question, for she screamed on, hardly stopping even to take breath.

"I advise you that the sooner you rid yourselves of her, the better you will be off. You know her husband. Isn't he a fine man? You know the young rabbi who comes to see me sometimes?"

Through all this tirade I could only stand in speechless amazement with my back against the wall, terror freezing my blood. Why was this woman there? Where had she come from? Was hethere too? These and a thousand questions passed rapidly through my brain. Before I had time to recover myself and speak

even a single word in self-defence, the mistress of the house addressed me sternly and solemnly in the Hebrew tongue.

"If this is the case," she said, "I am afraid you will not be able to stay with us. We thank God we are honest, respectable Jews making ourselves a respectable living. We are here already twelve years with a clean name and everybody knows us. My husband belongs to a couple of lodges and we are members of the synagogue. We don't want to be mixed up in such a business as this. Ach! Phew! It ain't nice!

"A young woman like you," she continued, "should live with her husband. I can't understand what you mean when you say you don't like him. Every woman who is married should like her husband and live with him as God has ordained."

Having delivered herself of this pompous speech, she left the room with the rest of the family and the woman who had caused the disturbance, all of them talking at once and waving their arms excitedly. Left alone, I pressed my baby closer and shrank into a cor-

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ner of the room, overcome by this sudden turn of affairs and trembling with apprehension. It was but my second day in London, alone and a stranger, and I had hardly seen daylight. Where was I to go? Which way should I turn? Where were the sunshine and peace of my dream?

"In service I will not go, I have settled my mind on that. I must try to do something to support my child. But where shall I go?"

I knew the class of people with whom I had to do only too well. In the Ghetto of London nothing takes place that the neighbors do not know of it. No one goes in or goes out without the whole neighborhood knows just where she is going and what for. And so it was that my arrival as a stranger created a stir among the people and caused the talk of the "veibele and the pretty baby," which brought my mother down on me so soon.

Nor was I by any means sure that my troubles ended when I planned to leave these people with whom I had spent the night. It was very probable that the angry woman

would denounce me wherever she went; and that alone would prevent my securing employment. However, I resolved to put my misgivings to the test; and leaving my baby with the strangers who, I well knew, would have no resentment for him since the Jews are universally kind to small children, I went out into the street.

All day I walked down one narrow street of Petticoat Lane and up another, hardly knowing where my feet were carrying me. I began to realize more and more that I was alone in the great city of London without a relative or a friend.

Presently a woman came toward me, a tailor's wife, whom I recognized as one of the crowd present in the morning when my mother denounced me to the Jewish family. I recalled that this woman had taken no part in the discussion which followed the disgusting scene and, on the contrary, appeared to sympathize with my unhappy plight, at least as far as her nature and position among her neighbors would allow.

Her attitude toward this and other things

was manifest in the emancipation of her dress. She no longer wore a wig. Her own hair was smoothly combed back from her forehead. A black satin quilted petticoat, thickly lined and silk-stitched all over with gaily colored diamond-shaped checks, reached only to her ankles. Her stockings hung in wrinkles, and her carpet slippers, being large, clattered up and down over her heels, displaying at every step a good sized hole. A thick gold ropechain was wound several times about her neck, the ends concealed in her bodice.

It was eleven o'clock Friday morning, and she was just returning from market. Her coarse white apron, tied with two long strings about her waist, was gathered up at the corners so as to form a bag, in which she carried a fish, some onions, potatoes, garlic and pickles, each separated from the other by pieces of newspaper; some schmierkase (cream cheese), and butter that smelt so oily and greasy I had to turn my head away. A large bottle of oil for frying the fish, and some half rotten pears completed the contents of the apron.

As she talked she would now and again take

out one of the little pears and pop it into her mouth. A large basket hung on her arm containing two loaves of bread, candles for the Sabbath, (every Jewish woman must bless her candles on Friday night), a chicken freshly killed and plucked, coffee, tea, sugar, two or three kinds of spices, and eggs-all in the basket. While she was talking she must have upset a pot of molasses near the bottom, for it was dripping upon the ground apparently without her knowledge.

My heart throbbed with joy; for somehow I felt that here was one woman less bigoted than the rest, one to whom I could turn in my hour of need and find some sympathy and help.

"Missus," I said, "when I saw you this morning I understood from your conversation that your husband is a tailor. Would you please teach me how to make button-holes on your husband's coats? He employs many hands in his shop and if you would teach me to make button-holes, I could pay you afterwards from my wages."

"No," she replied, "I have just met your 105

mother again and I think it isn't right that you don't want to live with your husband. You should remember that he is a rabbi and will some day have a place. You are a young woman. After your parents have taken care of your husband so long, how can you blame them for being angry? That's no way to do things. No one will help you.

"You see," she went on, "it is impossible for me to take you into my house. I'm not afraid of my husband leaving me; still, you know, it is London. Every day you hear of such zorus (trouble). We need a hand, we could use you, but I can't help you. I don't want to quarrel with your mother by taking you. You have made a mistake."

While she was talking to me another woman came up with her basket and bundles, and then another and another, until there was a group of four or five, all from the some neighborhood, all talking loudly and analyzing my criminal behavior.

<sup>&</sup>quot;It is dreadful," said one.

<sup>&</sup>quot;It is shameful," said another.

<sup>&</sup>quot;I suppose," said a third, "she must have

some other fellow in view, or she wouldn't run about the streets as she does, and not want to live with such a nice man, a rabbi, a learned man. A decent girl wouldn't do such things. Oh, no, thank you. I? I wouldn't talk to her. She thinks with her red cheeks she will get Lord Mayor for her husband. Any woman who takes her into her shop is a big fool, and will regret it afterwards. A girl who can do what she has done will run away with any man she likes herself as quickly as she will run away from one she doesn't like herself. Oh no! It's not the man's fault. It's such women as she who make trouble for us."

She turned sharply upon me. "What are you loafing around here for? Why don't you go to Whitechapel? That's the place for you." And again addressing herself to the crowd, which had been steadily growing larger, she continued with assumed importance:

"Her husband! Oi! Vy! Such a fine man! I tell you she will not see him any more. Na! Na! I guess not! He told me himself he would not live with her. You ought to see the fine girl he is getting! Why a man

like him! He is such a fine man; such a learned man. My yunkel says he will be one of the greatest learned men in London. Why, Dr. Adler sent for him twice and I think he is going to be assistant for Dr. Alder. The schinne (halo) rests upon him. He doesn't want her! Why should he? She has a child. Ach! Nebich! Such a fine child!"

"Did you see him?" asked one of the crowd.

"No, I didn't. But I know. She cares lots for him. Here she loafs around and leaves him with strangers. Ach! A mother? Phew! Thank you." She spat on the stones and walked off with a sneer. The crowd dispersed and left me standing there speechless.

"Do I really belong to Whitechapel?" I wondered. Heaven knew I had no thought in that direction, nor had I any desire. All I wanted was work and an honest living. I could not understand what wrong I had committed in disliking that man. The very thought of him was repugnant to me. I was willing to sign any contract,—to be a slave the rest of my life—rather than be obliged to live with him.

Then the thought came to me: "I do not have to go to Whitechapel because those women say so. I will find some tailor who will give me work."

But my search was not an easy one, and when evening came I was still without employment. The shops were closed and the men were going to shool (Sabbath eve prayer). The women sat around on chairs, wearing clean aprons, their hair freshly combed, for their work was done. Through the windows I could see the tables set for supper; two twisted loaves of bread covered with a crocheted napkin. Candles were lighted to signify that the Sabbath had been received, and that the week's work was finished.

The sight of these tables reminded me that I had had nothing to eat all day. Several times I had approached the door of some neighbor's house in the hope that they would give me and my baby shelter over the Sabbath; but when they saw me coming they turned away, and I could plainly see in their faces the horror they had of me. Everybody seemed to know my story, and would not open their doors to such

an outcast. It grew very dark and I was still wandering up and down the streets. Oh, how hungry I was!

At last I reached the house where I had spent the night; and knowing they would not permit me to sleep again under their roof, and yet not willing to be separated from my boy, I stole softly up to the room where he lay sleeping, lifted him tenderly in my arms and returned to the street. Up and down I wandered, trying here and trying there to find a place where the work of my hands might bring the wherewithal for a meal. But everywhere I went my pretended mother had told the story of the runaway girl throughout the Ghetto, and apparently took a fiendish delight in making the "cursed witch" suffer for being the cause of the trouble which she vowed and declared was the reason for her expulsion from Russia.

The fact of the matter was, as I afterward learned, that my pretended mother had so conducted herself in denouncing me and declaring to the Russian authorities that she was in no way responsible for my disappearance,

that she roused their suspicions; and they, always ready to prosecute a Jew on the slightest provocation, demanded an explanation from her. Beside, it was now known in the town that the veshiva bocher's wife was not altogether kosher because she had Christian blood in her; and, as it had happened on more than one occasion, that Jews have been accused of using Christian blood for the Feast of the Passover and have been brought to trial for it, the yeshiva bocher and my pretended parents, knowing they would be unable to account for me, determined to forestall the authorities and depart for foreign lands. In consequence, they disposed of their small belongings and came to London, where, once in England, they were safe. And so it was that my pretended mother took it upon herself to "pay" me for the trouble of her own making and in turn became the cause of my trouble and homeless wanderings in the streets of the Ghetto.

I spent the night in a yard, huddled with my baby behind a pile of barrels, and awoke to find that the sun had risen upon the Jewish Sabbath and the shops were still closed. The

Jews were out on the streets in full force, dressed in their best; and all who knew me turned away with contempt. Had I been the worst woman on earth, they could not have insulted me more.

I wandered about until it was almost evening. I had eaten nothing for two days, except a cup of coffee and a slice of bread which a woman gave me out of pity for my child. Weak and hungry I finally came to the house of a widow, whose hunchback daughter was a button-hole maker and worked at home. I promised to carry the work back and forth for her if she would teach me how to make button-holes and let me sleep in the house. "Any place, even the floor will do," I said, "until I can procure work of some kind from one of the factories."

Without waiting for an invitation I passed from the hall into the kitchen, threw myself on a chair and cried bitterly while the widow and her daughter looked on in pity.

"You see," said the mother in a choking voice, "I am very poor and I can give you nothing to eat. But sleep? Of course you

and your boy can sleep on the floor until you can find something better. That's all I can do for you."

Weary as I was, I was indeed grateful for even that and I soon fell asleep with my baby clasped in my arms.

The evening passed on into the night; and worn out with wandering I slept on until awakened by my baby who was crying from hunger. Once awake, I too felt its pangs and realized the sufferings of my little one. I lay there for a moment quarreling with God and wondering why I was called upon to suffer so much. I knew I had committed no great wrong. I knew I had always tried to do right.

As I lay there thinking and quarreling, my troubles were forgotten in the consciousness of hunger pains and, driven to desperation, I resolved upon a plan of action that, in younger years, would have seemed impossible.

Just above my head was a cupboard, and I could smell the bread behind its unlocked doors. I arose slowly, trembling with fright. It was my first attempt at thieving. I opened the door of the cupboard. There lay half a

loaf of bread with a knife conveniently beside it. I cut off a thin slice and crouched back upon the floor. In an instant my baby had devoured it and I took another one for myself. Slice after slice disappeared until the bread was nearly all gone.

At last I lay down. My hunger was somewhat satisfied, but I was dreadfully frightened. I knew the woman would discover that someone had been at the loaf; so I lay there in fear and did not dare to stir, nor could I sleep the rest of the night. Toward morning the widow's son, a boy of fourteen, went to the cupboard.

"Ma," he called, "there isn't enough bread for me to take along." How my heart sank!

Fortunately the mother only answered: "You will find some coppers there. Take tuppence and buy a loaf. I thought there was quite a piece left." The boy grumbled a bit but went out and returned shortly with a loaf of bread, cut half of it and went to work.

The hunchback daughter came to me and announced that it was time to go to the factory for the coats; so I went along to help carry them. When we returned I took my boy and

left the house, ostensibly to buy something to eat, for I wanted these people to think I would have breakfast and would not tax their charity. We strolled about long enough to give the widow and her daughter time to finish their meal and then started back to the house.

On the way there we came suddenly upon my pretended mother returning from the grocer's. With a scream of rage, she flew at me and struck me so forcibly with her basket that my nose began to bleed. Not content with the severity of this chastisement she grabbed me by the hair and pulled it with all her might.

"Here's my good-for-nothing daughter," she screamed. "I am an unfortunate mother of this *drab*, who is disgracing me on the streets of London! Have pity on me and drive her out. She'll take your husbands away. You don't know how bad she is."

Her screams soon attracted a crowd that kept growing larger and larger all the time. I stood in the center of this excited, gesticulating mob, wiping my bleeding face with my apron. I could move neither one way nor the other, for whichever way I turned the crowd would fol-

low. A policeman appeared and some of the women jabbered an explanation of the tumult in broken English. "We'll keep an eye on her, we'll keep an eye on her," said the majestic guardian of the law as he drove the crowd away and left me standing there, thankful to be alone.

An English woman living near-by opened her door and called me in. She gave me a towel and sent me into the yard to wash my face. I could hear her talking to some other women, and though the sound of several voices reached me clear and distinct, I could not understand what they said. When I had washed my face, they gave me something to eat; but I could only choke and cry until they all cried with me. They tried to talk to me, but beyond interpreting by their manner that they were uttering kindly words of friendship and advice, I could not understand a word they said.

Only a few days in London, hounded by my foster-mother at every step, events had proved to me that the Ghetto was not large enough to hold us both; that the religious fanaticism of these benighted people smothered their finer

sensibilities and turned them from friends to fiends. Yet my pretended mother was not wholly to blame, for the marriage bond is held in such veneration by the Jews that she but followed the light of her understanding in denouncing me, who had refused to observe its sanctity. And so, when she took it upon herself to turn everybody against me, she only played upon the innate characteristics of these people, who followed blindly the dictates of their religion, rather than the promptings of the heart.

Nevertheless, though Fortune had cast me among them from the days of my infancy, yet I felt I was not of them; and as the conviction dawned upon me that employment in the Ghetto was virtually impossible so long as my foster-mother lived there, a ray of hope came that some other section might hold forth better things. But where was that section and how was I to get there?

The woman of the house hunted up an old bonnet which she tied on my head, and without a word, beckoned me to follow. We wound our way through crooked streets to White-

chapel, where we boarded a tramway for the West End. Arrived there, my new-found friend entered a tailor-shop kept by a Russian Jew, whose wife was an Englishwoman. After some parley in the back of the shop which I could neither hear nor understand, the tailor came forward and announced that he would try me at making button-holes.

Here was the long-sought opportunity; and I could only cry and stammer my gratitude alternately to the tailor and to the kind woman who had brought me there. Hope for the future mingled with dread lest my fostermother should again find me out and hunt me from the place; but I determined to work with a will while the opportunity lasted and rely on the hope that my pretended mother's influence was confined to the limits of the Ghetto.

I worked hard and applied myself with diligence. Everything seemed rosy, and again I had reason to feel that the way had opened up for me. But it was not to be so. After three days the tailor began to annoy me with his attentions, so much so that it became very un-

comfortable. As I could not speak English, I was unable to complain to his wife; so I had to suffer in silence and try to keep him away as best I could. Finally he became so bold that his wife noticed that wherever I was he would manage to have something to do, and she watched him. They permitted me to sleep in the kitchen; but when I went to bed I could hardly sleep for fear he would come in, and I was obliged to put chairs in front of the door, since there was no lock.

One night, not knowing this, he pushed the door open and the chairs fell over with a great clatter. His wife, who had been lying awake and listening, hurriedly ran downstairs and confronted us at the door. She understood at a glance that I was not to blame, but fully realized it was better for herself and for me that I should not remain in her house any longer. So in the morning, she gave me to understand I was to follow her, and she took me to another Jewish tailor. She told him I was already making a very good button-hole, and that if he would give me work she would take me to a place where I could sleep.

So it was arranged. He gave me a coat to put button-holes in and I took it home. Of course in three days I could not have learned very much about button-hole making, and furthermore I did not know a thing about them when I began. In the coat which the tailor gave me to work on the button-holes had been merely punched in with a puncher designed for that purpose and, as is generally the case, the small one in the lapel was punched a little corner-wise. Not knowing any better, I had an idea that a mistake had been made and tried to straighten it out. By straightening it and pulling it, the button-hole, when I had finished, was certainly crooked, but I imagined I was helping the tailor. I took the coat over and gave it to him, fully satisfied that he would realize how clever I was when he saw I was capable of finding out a mistake and rectifying it. No sooner, however, had he looked at it, than he exclaimed:

"You fool! The hole is crooked. Well, you are a button-hole maker, you are. You have got a loch (hole). Well, take your hole to some other department. It certainly won't

do here." He thrust the coat in my face. "Take it out," he shouted. "Go over with it to the button-hole maker over there."

All the hands laughed at the crooked buttonhole of which I had been so proud, and the tailor himself remarked that if I was going to be so smart in the future, I could prepare to eat bread with a spoon, as that would be about all I could get of it. I sat down and carefully tried to renovate the button-hole.

"I say, missus, don't cut that coat now," the tailor yelled. "Next thing you will have to pay for it and you would have to make a great many crooked holes to do that." Everybody laughed at this sally.

Finally I finished, and one of the hands showed me how the lapel button-hole should be made, proffering her assistance at any time I was in need of it. I was indeed grateful to her. I asked the tailor if he would kindly give me another coat.

"Eh, want another coat? Go to that man over there at the other end of the table, he'll give it to you."

I saw a man standing there with a large press-

ing iron in his hand. I went over to him and stood silently beside his table, for I knew he had heard what the boss had said. Quite fifteen minutes passed by and it finally dawned upon me that I was in the way; for coats and sleeves came flying from all directions and seemed to follow me whichever way I moved. At last I ventured to ask the man if he had any coat for me. Pointing at me with his pressing iron, he called to another man seated at a near-by machine:

"Oh, Schleimele; give her a coat. Don't you see she is waiting? Go over there," he directed, "he'll give you a coat. He's got'em."

The whole crowd of shop-hands laughed boisterously, while I stood there, dimly conscious that they were making fun of me. I could not see the joke, nor could I understand why they should tease me so. To me it was too serious a matter for teasing. As I stood there, uncertain what to do, the tailor's wife came in with a large tray filled with cups of tea. She took in the situation at a glance, and, comprehending my position, bade me come downstairs with her.

There was something about this woman that placed her a little above her class. It may have been a keener perception; or it may have been a natural sympathy. Whatever it was I felt drawn toward her and before I knew it I had told her everything about myself. She listened in silence, her eyes constantly searching my face; and when I had finished she looked down at the floor for a moment, apparently absorbed in thought. Finally she looked up again and I could see that the story of my difficulties had won her sympathy.

"It will be very difficult," she said, "for you to get along in these shops. They are a common, vulgar set and my husband is like the rest."

Again she looked down at the floor as if she were thinking what could be done. I waited in suspense until she should speak again.

"I'll tell you what I will do for you, my girl," she continued at last. "There is a Jewish theatre here and the second operator upstairs is the leading actor and president of the Dramatic Club. I will call him down later, not just now, for I don't want the others to know. If

they're all so smart I'll just fix them." Her black eyes snapped with evident relish at the thought of getting even with somebody, from which I felt that things were none too smooth even for her, a boss's wife.

"You are just the kind of woman they want in that theatre," she went on. "Have you ever acted?"

"No," I replied, "I never have."

"Well, that doesn't matter," she said encouragingly, "you don't need experience to act in that kind of a theatre. None of them know very much about it anyway. All you need is to look pretty and wear corsets to make your figure look nice. So you go home and I'll send that operator around to see you tonight. I'm sure he'll want to put you on the stage and make a great actress of you."

"Suppose he does not come, or will not take me," I said doubtfully. "Perhaps it would be better for me to look for another tailor who might give me some cheap coats to make."

"No," she replied. "You don't need to. When I tell you I surely know what I am talking about. Schleimele, the president of the

Dramatic Club, will pay you at least ten shillings a week. You can live grandly on that. You can't tell—a thing like that may mean your whole future. When you once get on the stage, you may get a boss for a husband."

A boss in that part of London, means a master tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, etc. I assured her I was not looking for a boss but that I would be glad to avail myself of the ten shillings. But how I was to go on the stage and be an actress, I could not understand. I had never in my life seen a theatre, but I had heard people say that actresses were very bad women. Of course I was not going to be bad, I was sure; but I wondered what I would have to do.

Absorbed with the thoughts of this new career I went home to prepare for the visit of my prospective employer. Would he take me? That was the question. Ten shillings a week and no knowledge of the profession necessary! It really seemed absurd to think for a moment that he would take me, I and half resolved to waste no time in waiting for him. But then the tailor's wife was so positive; and besides

it was really too late to go about among the shops looking for employment. So I decided to wait the visit of the dramatic president and occupy the time in improving my personal appearance, to make up for my lack of knowledge and training.

I little understood then how small a part that knowledge and training play in the theatres of the class to which this one belonged. A pretty face, a good figure and a little self-assurance are about all the qualifications necessary; for neither the manager of the theatre nor the actors themselves know what talent is, nor do they care so long as there are those on the stage who will attract the audiences. Beside, the place to which I was going was more or less of an amateurish affair, as I afterward discovered.

All these things I had yet to learn; and being ignorant of them I went to work with a will to make myself attractive, in the hope that the president of the theatre would lose sight of my ignorance in the charm of my personal appearance—if I had any. Since I had an idea that all actresses wore short skirts, I raised

mine a trifle. I was quite satisfied with my appearance, but, gracious, how shabby my shoes were! It would be impossible to go on the stage in such shoes. I was certain that every actress wore a pretty pair of red or blue shoes and nice silk ribbon bows; and that the theatrical people furnished the fine dress. I realized that when the waist is drawn in, the hips protrude and the short skirt will stand out full; so I took a little towel from my room, placed it around my waist and drew it in tight, to see how I would look were I to wear a corset. Oh, what a fine figure! With nice blue slippers tied with red ribbons, and my bodice with the neck cut out, certainly I would look charming! I opened one or two buttons at the neck and looked at myself in the glass. What a clear white neck I had! It was so full and plump that I really thought myself very pretty. I took off the bodice altogether and looked at my arms. They were very pretty too, but the vaccination marks were there and made little spots. I made up my mind that I would put large silk bows over them to match my shoe ribbons.

When I had everything planned as to how I ought to look, I was flushed and very happy. I washed my face, neck and ears over and over again, for I expected to receive the president of the Dramatic Club and wanted to look my very best. I combed my hair, parted it on one side, and tied it up tightly at the back in a little English knot. I washed my apron in the same water, rinsed the garment well, borrowed from the Missus a bit of blueing, and then hung the apron in the yard in the sun. I asked the Missus if I might put an iron on the fireplace and she very kindly consented. By the time it was hot, the apron was half dried, so I brought it in, rolled it well in my hands, and ironed it until it looked like new. I put it on and waited patiently. I did not then realize that my hunger was a part of my training for the stage; but now I am sure that there was no actor or actress in London that day who was quite as hungry as I was. Not only was I without food, but I had no hopes of obtaining any; but as hunger is a part of the profession, I started out well.

Finally, satisfied that my appearance was the

very best I could make it under the circumstances, I sat down to wait the visit of my prospective employer and gave myself up to the conflict between hope and anxiety.

ALCOHOLOGICAL CONTROL CONTROL

# CHAPTER VIII.

#### THE STAR ACTRESS.

SCHLEIMELE arrived, prompt and dressed in his best. The Missus heard his three sharp knocks and showed him in. Aware of the great preparations I had made to receive him, and noting that he too was all "dressed up," she watched us suspiciously. I was confused and by my very embarrassment stumbled into good manners. Finally I managed to ask:

"Are you the gentleman the 'boss's' wife sent to me?"

"I am the president of the Dramatic Club," he replied grandly and threw himself dramatically into a chair. He looked at me for a moment, rather peculiarly I thought, while I stood before him, modestly and with downcast eyes, waiting for him to proceed.

"I need a woman for the stage," he said presently, "and I'm sure it will be a good thing for you. I can see you will make a great and

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dear actress." He looked me over from head to foot as though studying my "points."

"I give you my word," he continued enthusiastically, "when they hear in London and Petticoat Lane that we've got such a handsome girl as you on the stage, why next Saturday night it'll be packed. It'll be crowded! I'll bet we'll have five hundred people. They won't be able to get into the theatre! We'll raise the price! Even the members of the club will have to pay. And then, I'm sure, if you play once or twice, you'll be able to play in the biggest theatre in London!"

His enthusiasm quite overcame me; and the rosy future he presented raised my hopes so high that already I began to picture a little home for me and my Dady built with my earnings on the stage. This man was the president of the Dramatic Club, manager of the theatre, and head actor; surely he must know what he was talking about!

"Ah!" he continued with the same peculiar look at me, "you're bright and pretty. We've always had to dress a man up for the women's parts, but now we'll have a real woman to

play them and a handsome one too. When I saw you in the shop to-day I said to myself right away; 'There's a girl who will make a great actress.' You looked so forlorn I really pitied you."

I thanked him for his kindness and ventured to ask what I would have to do to become a great actress.

"You will have to play only twice a week," he replied, "or perhaps three times, and you will have a whole week to study. Of course you can read Yiddish! You can study your part yourself; and next Saturday night you can play. Oh, yes!" he went on, rising dramatically from his seat, "Next Saturday night we will play 'Die Kaprisne Tochter.' There's a part you will play beautifully. You will make a grand success, I know, for you will play almost the whole piece."

His enthusiasm seemed to run away with him, for he took out five shillings which he laid grandly upon the table. "Here's five shillings," he said, "and Saturday night, after the play, we'll have a meeting and arrange how much to pay you a week. You will play by

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us all the time and we will pay you regular wages."

I thanked him again for his kindess; but conscious of my ignorance of things theatrical I timidly asked if he would give me a few instructions in the duties of an actress.

"To-morrow evening," he replied, "I want you to be in Mensall Street Hall; there we will make rehearsal. When you go off the stage, don't go down with your back to the audience, but always go off backward with your face to the public. And when you first come on, make a little bow and smile to them, so; and the same when you go off." And he proceeded to illustrate very majestically how the bow and the smile should be made. I watched with rapt attention, flushed with the thought of the people clapping their hands when I made that bow and smile, for I believed I could do it better than he.

"Will you paint?" he asked abruptly.

"Yes," I answered somewhat hesitatingly, "if it is necessary."

"Well, you needn't put on much; your cheeks are naturally red."

He remained quite some time explaining all about the theatre and giving instructions in the art of acting. It was very late when he finally left and I sat down to reflect on all that had happened. I was an actress with five shillings! My joy knew no bounds.

The next morning I went out to buy a loaf of bread, a hap'orth of tea and half a pound of sugar. The Missus said I might use her teapot, cups and saucers, and anything I wanted. Evidently she too regarded me as already the star actress of the Dramatic Club, and probably pictured herself walking into the theatre at all hours and without paying an admission fee. She even went so far as to say she would not mind if I bought half a pound of meat to cook with her dinner and took a plate of her soup. A plate of soup and a little meat! It certainly would be a grand dinner.

I cut off my hair in front so as to form a flat "bang." I bought a bit of red flannel and wound it around my neck, as this was considered very stylish at that time in Petticoat Lane. I bought new shoestrings and two handkerchiefs; a white one for my pocket and a large

# The Star Actress.

yellow one to throw over my shoulders. I was very proud; and I imagined as I passed from one shop to another that every one was looking at me and whispering: "There goes the great actress of the Yiddish theatre."

In the evening the president called and said I looked ten times better. No wonder! I had had three meals. He took me and Dady to the theatre for the rehearsal. Arrived at the place I could not see any difference between the theatre itself and the houses which surrounded it. It was an ordinary dwelling; but when we passed through the hall to the rear, we came to a large room which was occupied during the day as a tailor's workshop, but served as a theatre on Saturday and Sunday nights, and sometimes one other during the week. On these occasions the work-benches were turned about to face a low stage with a curtain and one or two screens painted to represent trees, which served as the scenery for any play that might be given.

The room was bare of other furnishings except some unfinished garments on which the tailors had been working; which reminded the

audience that they were in a shop and not a theatre, and therefore peanuts and pop-bottles of ginger ale were permitted. As the play progressed a bottle would pop now and then and the audience would call out: "Sh-sh-sh!!!"

When we entered the room several young men had already arrived and one of them was trying to blow music out of a long pipe. We advanced toward the stage and someone called for me to go up and sing. Sing? I did not know how to sing. How could I? At home my conditions were such that I never felt like singing as other children did; yet I realized that here was the first test of my ability as an actress and I was frightened. Happily the president came to my rescue, and, reminded them that this was a dramatic society. Drama meant acting, not singing, he informed them, and, even if I could sing, he, the president, was not going to make a laughing-stock of the dramatic society, his honor and his name. "Only drama is going to be played here," he announced firmly, "and this is our dramatist."

This point settled we proceeded to the rehearsal of "Die Kaprisene Tochter" (The

Wayward Daughter); and by the time it was over I had mastered my part so well that but little further rehearsal was necessary.

Saturday night came at last and my appearance upon the stage was greeted with loud clapping of hands and stamping of feet and murmurs of "Ah!"—"Ain't she pretty!"—"See, they have got a real woman." They made so much noise it was several minutes before I could make myself heard sufficiently to go on with my part.

Finally the tumult ceased and the play progressed to the end amid the occasional popping of corks and stamping of feet. The hall was crowded to the doors and my success was immense. Bouquets of tissue paper flowers were showered upon me from all parts of the room; and I was so proud and happy and excited that I hardly noticed how badly the wire fastenings were scratching my hands. After the performance the president came over and congratulated me.

"You will soon be known in the whole Ghetto!" he exclaimed. "You played a very heavy piece all alone. Ah! I knew, I knew

right away when I saw you that you would make a great actress!"

He handed me a guinea and told me I need not bother about paying back the five shillings, and that he would see that I received a guinea each week. He said I needed some clothes and must order a dress. He would advance me a few pounds, or as much as I needed, and deduct ten shillings each week as repayment. I thanked him again and again, and, with my baby on my arm, returned home the proudest woman in London. I was so happy—oh—so happy! I knew I was a great actress, because I could already see the mistakes the others had made; and besides I was to receive a guinea a week!

That night I rested peacefully, with my baby by my side; and being an actress, naturally did not get up until noon the next day. While I was dressing, I heard loud talking in the kitchen, and going out to investigate, I saw the Missus talking to a little woman. "Don't be foolish," I heard her say. "I'm sure it is nothing. I promise you I will keep my eye on the matter." But the little woman still stood

there, refusing to take the hint to go. Then, suddenly spying me, she called out:

"Say, you're the actress in the Yiddish theatre, aren't you? Did you know I was secretly married in court to the president of the theatre?"

I had been long enough in London to know just what her question meant. When a Jewish girl goes with a young man there and they make a mistake, she usually calls in the assistance of friends or relatives to drag him to court, where he is forced to marry her. The affair is kept as a secret that everybody knows, but they do not live together as man and wife until they have accumulated sufficient money for a public wedding. It is often the case that neither party is very much in a hurry, so it sometimes takes from five to ten years before the religious ceremony is celebrated. Meanwhile the girl keeps an eye on him, and if she becomes jealous of some woman, she will reveal the secret of her marriage, as a warning to other women to keep away from her private property.

When this woman told me that she had been

married in court to the president, I thought the affair had just taken place, and I being the only and leading actress, she had come to pay me honor by telling me of it first. So I stretched out my hand and said: "Masiltof! I wish you all the happiness in the world. I am sure he is a very nice gentleman because he has been very good to me. He told me I could get a dress made, or anything I needed as an actress, and that he would advance me a few pounds, which I could pay back ten shillings a week."

While I spoke, her eyes opened wider and wider, until I thought they would pop out of her head; and when I had finished she gave a yell and bounded toward me.

"Is that it?" she shrieked. "So he has the money to lend you; but for me, when I ask him to take me to a real theatre, he has no money! I'm no greenhorn like you! I've been in London ten years, and I know a green mod (girl) like you isn't going to take my husband away from me. I'll go over to the shop right now and I'll fix him! I'll show him, if he can give money to other women and have

none to marry me with! I'll play theatre for him. I'll be his actress to-day.

"What chu tink o' dat?" she continued, turning to the Missus, "What chu tink o' dat? Isn't it terrible? I tell you," she screamed at me, "if I find out there is anything going on between you there'll not be a hair left in your head." With that, she flew out of the house.

She was a little woman compared to me, but I was trembling like a leaf. When she had gone, the Missus placed a cup of coffee on the table. "Don't worry," she said, "I've known Baille for a long time, only I didn't know the president was her husband. I knew she was secretly married in court to some one, but I had no idea she had such a nice man as the president for her husband. To tell you the truth, he would suit you better than he does her."

She said this with a cunning glance, as much as to say that she was ready to help us if we wanted her to. "I can't think of such a thing," I said impatiently. "My thoughts are only on becoming a great actress."

A few moments later the president came

in. It was noontime, and, having finished his dinner early, he had come to visit me. He brought a large copying book, as he had learned that I could neither read nor write, even Hebrew. He wrote the alphabet in a book and told me to study it until the evening, and that every evening he would come and teach me an hour or so, so that in a short time I would be able to read my parts for the plays.

Suddenly I saw him turn pale and tremble. Glancing in the direction of his stare, I saw the little woman again. She had seen him sitting at the table close by me, and rushed in screaming, "You liar!"

Her husband rose excitedly. "See here," he said, "if you are going to make a noise wherever I am, I tell you I'll go away, and you'll never see me again. So you had better be more careful as to what you say. Do you understand me?"

She began to cry and tried to strike me; but the president threw himself between us and warned her that if her noise and abusive language did not cease immediately, he would never speak to her again. He said he would

tell her friends a few things about her that would shut her mouth. My poor baby became frightened and screamed, and I tried to get away with him to my room; but the president's wife clutched my hair and, screaming loudly, dragged me around the room. The Missus and the president separated us.

Finally the president was obliged to return to his work; and, as his wife was a button-hole maker, she too had to go away. They left the house together; while I, frightened and disgusted, determined to have nothing more to do with the theatre. I told the Missus I would go to look for work among the tailors again, as I had made my last appearance on the stage and feared the president's wife. The Missus laughed and told me it would be very foolish for me to look for work at a tailor's, as they would never give work to any one who had once been an actress. Overwrought by the excitement I sat down and cried, that having my child to support, I was again unable to provide for its wants.

In the evening, to my great surprise, the president and his wife came to see me to-

gether. She was smiling and wore a new gold ring which her husband had purchased for her. She spoke to me of my studies as if nothing had happened.

"If you like," she said pleasantly, "I will take you to my dressmaker. Ach! She's such a fine dressmaker and she's cheap, too. She'll make a dress for you so that you will have it for next Saturday. In this dress you are wearing you cannot play again. I tell you, when she will make you a dress, you will bloom on the stage. You ought to hear already how they talk about you all over London. They'll have to have a larger hall. Come with me right now. I know a Jewish shoemaker who will take your measure for a pair of shoes."

Amazed, I stood and looked at the woman who but a few hours before had pulled my hair and was now so attentive to me. I wondered if this was a part of the theatrical business, as I could not understand how she could speak to me in such a gentle tone, after having given me such a tongue-lashing in the morning.

"Yes, you go with Baille," said the president, "she will show you everything."

Reluctantly, I took up my boy and followed her out of the house. I distrusted her; still there was no choice. I had lost all hope of ever finding work with the tailors, so I was obliged to accept this, the only alternative. We went to the shoemaker and then to the dressmaker, where we made an appointment for the next day at noon, when I was to bring the material for my dress. For two or three days I was busy with my studies and my costume and so interested in my work that I forgot the troubles of the early part of the week and once more built air-castles of my future as a STAR.

Saturday night again arrived and I bowed to an even larger audience than before. I looked well in my new costume, and I was doing so nicely that the president stayed behind the scenes, telling me constantly how well I looked and what a great future there was for me, as the English papers would certainly bring me out before long as a great star.

Again the paper flowers were showered upon me when I walked off the stage as an accomplished actress should, backwards; but before

the last act was finished, my voice was drowned by the noise of another guarrel behind the scenes, between the president and his wife. and the audience could not hear a word I was saying. She was in one of her jealous moods again, for some friends of my foster-mother, who had of course heard of my success, had not missed the opportunity of further denouncing me and opening the eyes of the little woman to the dangerous ground upon which she was standing. I was a terrible woman they told her, and a man like the president could not help being led away by me; so she had come to the theatre with the intention of proclaiming to the audience my life and character, according to her views, which were supported by my mother and her friends.

The president and the other actors feared a scandal; so they managed to pacify her by promising that if she would wait until the performance was over she could act as she liked with me, without interference from them. She was apparently satisfied with their promise, and employed her time in reading off to the president a few pages of her wifely rights; but as

soon as I stepped to the back of the stage she shook her fist at me, until they made her leave the stage, and she joined my mother who was waiting at the back door with another squad of women. They cursed and swore at me, and caused such an uproar that the president sent one of the actors to see if it was safe for us to venture out and go home; but this man returned to tell us that we must not attempt to leave the place as the mob was in such a rage it would be impossible for us to pass through without being attacked.

The president knew of a little window that looked out from the stage into a friendly woman's yard. As the theatre was nothing more than a tailor's shop, and as it was on the ground floor, I found little difficulty in making an exit through it. My Dady and I remained with the woman of the next yard, and the president went out with his silk hat on the back of his head, his chest out, and addressed his wife:

"Baille, one thing or the other," he commanded. "You keep quiet or I'll tell all the people what you are."

"I don't care," she replied, "I'll tell the whole world myself. Last night you carried her child home after rehearsal, and our own child you were ashamed to acknowledge before the world. We had to give it away to board with strangers, and he received such poor care that he died. I don't care—I married you in court, and you are my husband, just the same." Then she began to cry loudly, and all the women about her expressed their sympathy; for, in their estimation, I was the worst of women and she was such a nice girl!

This scandal concluded my theatrical career. It was told to the patrons of the theatre that the star was a bad character who had run away from her own lord and master, and had now robbed another woman of her husband. Everybody promised the little woman that they would go to the theatre no more unless I was removed.

The actors and the president held a meeting, which lasted until four o'clock in the morning, and the result was, that, while he wished me to remain with his company, the others refused to have me. I could not blame

them, for the theatre would have failed had I remained with them. The president announced the company dissolved. He said he had no further use for them, but would open a new theatre with new tailors, since there were many smart young men whom he could get. The consequence was that not only were the few shillings I had received the week before spent in clothes, but I also owed money to the president. Though he assured me the very next day that he would soon open a new theatre for me, I knew that no good would come of it, as his wife would make more trouble and I would again be the sufferer.

Once more I was without money and had my baby to care for; and with the stain of being an actress, I was worse off than before, for no tailor would permit me to work for him. I struggled on in the city of London, wretchedly enough, for several months. Now and then some tailor, being very busy, would give me a few coats, but most of them refused even to speak to me. Women pointed their fingers at me, my child and I walked about, miserable, and I was accused of leading a wicked life.

The woman with whom I lived very kindly told me not to worry about my rent, as she was sure the theatre would open again, and when I got my position, I could pay her. During the day she was good enough to give my little boy bread and tea; and enviously I would watch him partake of it. The president made several good offers and often asked me to accept money of him. One day he announced very gleefully, that his wife had eloped with a presser to America.

"My dear Mr. President," I said, "it makes no difference at all to me whether your wife is here or in America. You must not count on me to appear on the stage again. I am sorry I cannot pay you what I owe you now; but it was your fault, not mine, if you are the loser. When you understood the kind of woman your wife was, you should not have given me money." He looked rather sheepish and I continued:

"I have no use for the dress or the other things I bought, so take them with you. I shall be glad if you will take them, for I shall then be relieved of the debt. Do not trouble

me any more; you have been very kind to me and I appreciate it, but do not visit me again nor speak of the stage to me. If I ever get money, I will pay you the sum I owe you."

He went away and that was the last I heard of him. The old story was renewed, and I walked the streets seeking work, with fruitless results. I became desperate from hunger, for I had not tasted food for three days, and I felt as if I would go insane.

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## CHAPTER IX.

#### THE LAND OF THE FREE.

THE hours when I could not walk the streets in search of work gave ample opportunity for bitter reflection-and bitter indeed it was. My rosy future as an actress had come to a sudden end. The little home I had fancied seemed far away and I trembled at the thought of what might happen to Dady and me. I pictured all kinds of calamities in the future, but the present one of starvation was too real to need picturing. What was I to do? The Ghetto was closed to me, now that the woman who called herself my mother had roused the sympathy of the people and effectually turned them against me. The West-end, too, would henceforth hold no place for me since I could no longer earn a living in the theatre and the tailors would give no work to an actress. Employment in other parts of London was impossible, for I could not speak the language.

## The Land of the Free.

They only, who have felt the whole world unjustly against them, can realize the gloom, the despair that seized me and made me ready to grasp at any opportunity to earn even a few pence.

One day, while I was walking the streets in my fruitless search for work, I caught the odor of newly-baked bread that came from the doors of a baker shop. I rushed madly toward it and passed within. All about were loaves of bread, fresh-baked rolls and cakes of many kinds. To me it was a ravishing sight; and in my frenzied state I began to lay plans to take a loaf when no one was looking. Suddenly realizing what was passing through my brain, I checked myself. "Can it be possible," I thought, "that my first theft in the widow's house has made the second one easier?" Then I stood there, wondering how I could get one, a fierce battle between hunger and conscience raging within me.

Suddenly my attention was attracted to a nicely dressed German woman whose hair was just turning gray. She was asking the baker's wife if she knew of any young girls who would

like to go to America and learn to be nurses in a hospital. I heard the words "young girls" and "go to America," and that was enough.

"America! America! Away from my foster-mother; away from these people who are persecuting me!" was all I thought.

I rushed excitedly up to her. "Take me! Oh, take me!" I cried. "I am ready to go. I am all alone in the world and I can go any time. Take me! Oh, please take me!"

The woman turned upon me in astonishment.

"So you want to go to America, do you? Would you like to be a nurse in a hospital?"

"Anything," I cried, "anything, so long as I can get out of this cursed place."

"Very well," she replied, "come with me."

We walked to a hotel; and the woman spoke to me in such motherly tones of America, and how much money young girls earn there, that I thanked God for bringing me to her. I could hardly wait for the time to start. My new formed friend asked me if I had had any dinner. At the mere mention of food, I burst

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out crying and told her I had had nothing to eat for three days.

"You poor child!" she said. "How you must have suffered!"

She rang the bell and the waiter served me with dinner, which I devoured ravenously, while the motherly woman smoothed my hair and told me I must not worry, that my worst days were over. She said she had some other girls, and that they were all going to sail in a few days. She gave me money to pay off my debt to the president of the theatre and the woman with whom I had been living. Under the influence of her genial manner I told her all about myself and my baby. She listened attentively and with evident sympathy, and bade me fetch the boy to the hotel the very next day. We stayed a week with the old lady and then sailed for America.

Oh, America, blessed America! True mother who opened thine arms to receive a lonely girl and her infant child!

The only fortune I carried with me was perfect health and a radiant joy, which shone in my face and eventually made many friends

for me on the steamer. I was very happy. I was floating toward America, an unknown world to be sure, but what did I care? I had never known any but strangers, so it made little difference where I went. Beside, no place on earth could hold forth worse than I had already experienced. I was ignorant,—yes, ignorant of the treachery of the world; but, dreaming of the future possibilities which might be for me, and relying upon the promises of the motherly old German lady, I was happy and contented.

The first few days of the voyage were stormy and the passengers kept closely to their rooms; but the sea finally quieted down and everybody went on deck. For some reason which I could not understand, the old lady with whom we were traveling forbade the other girls to go on deck; but she accorded a special privilege to me on account of my child, though she cautioned me not to talk to any one.

"Don't tell anybody where you are going," she said, "nor how many girls are going with you."

She gave no reasons for her instructions,

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but, though they seemed strange to me, I did not question them. I was too ignorant of the world's treachery, and beside, the queer old lady had been very kind to me, and I felt deeply indebted to her. Though I tried to follow her instructions and avoid the other passengers, my Dady made it impossible. The little fellow's broken words and Petticoat Lane slang gave his prattle a gypsy grace, that attracted the passengers to him and kept me almost constantly on deck. They kissed him, they swung him in the air and carried him about; and my protests that they were spoiling my boy were of no avail.

One day I missed him from the deck. I searched about until my attention was attracted to a noisy group in the smoking room, and looking through the window, I saw my Dady, the center of a crowd of men, who were asking him all sorts of questions and laughing at his quaint replies. They made so much noise they attracted the attention of a man far down the deck, who arose from his chair and came forward to join in the jollity. I turned about to see if he might not prove to be of

some assistance in rescuing my boy, when, to my great surprise, I confronted Dr. Leiter of the Hamburg hospital.

"Well!" he exclaimed as his face lighted up with a smile of recognition, "this is a delightful surprise. I certainly never expected to find you here. Where have you been all this time?"

"How do you mean?" I asked. "Since we left London, or since I left Hamburg?"

"Both," he replied. "I want to hear all about you and how you have fared since we separated in Hamburg. Let's sit down while you tell me all about it."

We walked over to some vacant chairs and were soon engrossed with our mutual reminiscences. Little by little I told him some of my experiences in London including the tailor shop and the theatre; but I omitted the parts in which hunger and my pretended mother had figured, for their very coarseness made all reference to them repulsive to me. He listened attentively, with a question now and then, but when I told him about the crooked button-hole he laughed heartily and seemed to

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think it a monstrous joke. Finally, when I had told him all I cared to tell, he asked:

"And where are you going to now?"

"To America," I replied; "with an elderly German lady who is taking me there to be a nurse in a hospital."

"Where is the old lady" he asked in his impetuous way. "Is she on deck?"

"No, she's in her stateroom with the other girls. She never comes on deck nor does she permit any of her party to come here except me. She cautioned me not to speak to any one and I'm afraid she will be very angry when she finds out that I have spoken to you about it; but the excitement of meeting you so unexpectedly made me forget her instructions. Please, Doctor, don't say anything to any one about it."

"I'll do nothing of the kind," he said sharply. "Who is this woman and what is her name? Is she a doctor? Has she a private hospital in New York?"

I resented his questions somewhat, for to me they seemed unwarranted; so I reminded him how kind she had been to me in taking me

out of London where I had experienced so much difficulty. In my enthusiastic defense of her I went farther and told him all I knew about my benefactress, how I had met her in the baker shop and what she had told me of America and its opportunities for young girls to earn money. He listened silently to all I had to say, and when I finished he smiled incredulously.

"Now, my dear girl," he said, "you leave this matter to me. It needs investigating. It looks to me as if it was a more powerful hand than we realize that led me to return to America by way of London and on the same steamer with you. You think your troubles end with this old lady, but I think they are only beginning. It is certainly very suspicious that she keeps herself hidden from everybody and travels first-class with several young girls whom she will not permit to speak to the other passengers. It's my opinion that she's a bad woman with a bad purpose; so you stay right here until I come back."

He walked away and left me in a fever of suspense. In the excitement of meeting him

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and the discussion which followed, I had forgotten all about Dady, who, tired of his fun in the smoking-room, came running out to me. A horror overcame me and chilled me through and through. I bit my finger to see if I was alive. "Oh! My God!" I thought, "Is there no end to my sorrow, no end to my trouble? Must I always find, whichever way I turn, treachery and some one ready to take advantage of me? Can it be possible that this motherly old lady who has been so kind to me is all the Doctor says she is? It can't be. It must be a mistake," I said aloud.

By and by, Dr. Leiter returned and brought with him the captain of the vessel. They sat down on either side of me both looking very solemn and serious.

"Who is this old woman you are traveling with?" the captain asked.

- "I don't know," I replied.
- "What is her name?"
- "Really, I don't know, Captain."
- "Is she a doctor? Has she a hospital?"
- "If she's a doctor, I don't know; but she has a hospital, she says so."

"Well, where is her hospital?"

"I don't know," I replied. Then correcting myself, "Why in America of course, where we are going," I said. "She's really a dear old lady, Captain, and I wish Dr. Leiter wouldn't make such a fuss about her: she's been so kind to me."

"I'm afraid, my dear girl," said the captain kindly, "that this 'dear old lady' is a very bad woman. I'll look into this matter." And he arose to go.

Several times during the conversation I saw them exchange knowing glances when my answers apparently confirmed their thoughts, and I tried again to prove how kind the old lady had been to me, but my efforts were useless. The captain impressed upon me the fact that I was lacking in knowledge of the world, and bade me leave the affair in his and Doctor Leiter's hands. The conclusion of the matter was that a separate stateroom was made ready for me with a private stewardess for guardian, who took me aside and fully explained the danger I had so narrowly escaped. I was frightened and heart-broken. Once more my

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plans had come to nothing and I was confronted with that eternal question "What shall I do?"

I remained in my stateroom during the rest of the voyage and scarcely ventured on deck. I suspected everybody, trusted nobody and feared them all. Dr. Leiter came several times to see me and insisted on my proceeding with him to his home in Chicago, "Where," he said, "your troubles will be over; no more crooked button-holes for you." But I could not do it and I told him so. His kindness had served me well on two occasions but I always felt that same desire to get away when he began to show by his manner that his interest was more than platonic. Perhaps I should have jumped at the opportunity, as no doubt many girls would have done, but there are those whose actions are governed by the heart, not the head, and such people are seemingly illogical and inconsistent.

So, reluctantly and with many protests, Dr. Leiter agreed to go on to Chicago alone and leave me behind to work out my own salvation, after he had arranged with a Jewish family he

knew of on the East Side of New York to take me in. Accordingly, when the steamer warped into her dock, the passengers left with "goodbyes" and "best wishes" to Dady, and Dr. Leiter left me in charge of the stewardess to wait the coming of the Jewish people with whom I was to live. The other girls of the party were turned over to the authorities for, so the stewardess informed me, the motherly old German lady had managed to escape in the crowd and leave them to look after themselves. Some were turned over to friends in New York, but most of them were sent back on the same steamer to London.

# CHAPTER X.

# THE JEWISH QUARTER.

I had not long to wait after Dr. Leiter left me, for presently, as I stood watching the noise and bustle of the freight handlers on the dock, I saw a little woman come bustling up the gangplank and heard her ask in a shrill voice of some one I could not see:

"Hey! I say! Vere iss dot yunge veibchen mit de leedle paby vot I cum here by? Iss she nicht here already yet?"

Some one brought her on deck where I was waiting and I turned to greet her. She was short and wore a black skirt with a red waist and a green hat with many colored flowers. I saw to my delight that she was a German Jewess and I would not be friendless in a strange land. She carried a bundle several sizes too large for her, but her animated and jerky manner showed that she did not mind the burden in the least. She looked sharply

at me for a moment and then approached, with the same jerky steps which had brought her up the gangway, and addressed me in German.

"Are you the yunge-frau the American Doctor told me to call for?" she asked.

"I believe I am, if you mean Docter Leiter," I replied.

"Good," she said. "And if you will be ready we will go now. My husband will be waiting for me."

"I'll be ready in just a minute," I said, "as soon as I can get my few belongings and my baby."

I went to my stateroom, gathered up my Dady and my bundles, and, bidding the stewardess a grateful goodbye, I left the steamer with my jerky little guide, and was soon threading the streets of a great, strange city. I followed the woman up one dirty street and down another, until we reached a section which my companion informed me was the Jewish quarter; and so close was the air and so squalid the surroundings, that I thought it was even worse than Petticoat Lane. Suddenly, as

# The Jewish Quarter.

we were passing down what appeared to be a side street, something flew into my face with great force, and sliding down my dress, fell to the sidewalk. Heavens! It was a herring! Some woman had evidently bought it for her husband, but, because it did not suit him, he had thrown it out of the window and I was destined to come all the way from London to receive it. My companion, true to her sense of Jewish hospitality, laid her bundle on the sidewalk and proceeded to wipe the stain from my dress with a wisp of straw which she grabbed from a near-by packing case. Then without further adventure, we walked down another street and entered her house, where we mounted three flights of stairs and passed into her kitchen. She bade me sit down in her characteristically jerky fashion and then left me. I could hear her explaining to some one in the next room, evidently her husband, the cause of her delay in getting home; and while she was gone I took the opportunity to look about me and see how the Jews lived in America.

There were apparently but three rooms; for there was a dark opening on the left side of the

one in which I sat, that evidently led to the bedroom, while to the right was a door opening into the parlor. Beside these and the door to the hall there were no other outlets. I could see part way into the parlor, which contained a suit of cheap furniture with a large mirror at one end and a very fancy lamp suspended from the ceiling; and looking a little closer I could see that the "parlor" and the "factory" were one and the same, for a sewing machine stood in a far corner and the floor was strewn with fur capes and muffs, some lined, some partly lined and others still untouched. Evidently these people were workers on fur garments; and I began to manufacture visions of a new career for myself.

Presently, the woman returned to the kitchen bringing her husband, who advanced toward me with somewhat bulky steps.

"You come from London?" he asked. "The old story; your husband ran away from you to America and left you behind, eh? What a fool, eh? Such a nice veibele like you!"

I protested that my husband did not run away from me, but he would not listen. "Ah!

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we know," he persisted, "You don't have to be ashamed."

His wife put an end to further discussion. "Ach! Mein Gott, lieber Man! What is the matter with you to-day?" she said. "What are you going into politicians for? Leave her alone. When she says her husband is not run away he is not run away. Perhaps he's died. Go wash your hands" she said to me, "and we'll have something to eat. The little fellow must be hungry."

Her husband jumped off the corner of the table where he had perched, and proceeded to wash his hands in a bucket that was standing near by. I was then told to take a place at the table and I did so without any coaxing. As I seated myself I said to the missus, "I have three shillings left. If you can give me work, I will eat; but if you think you are unable to give me any, I will feed the little boy, but I will take only a cup of hot water and a slice of bread for myself."

"You can have all the work you want here, and all you want to eat. There's plenty of

both. It's only the lazy unions that don't want to see people working. We can't get hands enough on account of them. Would you like to learn how to line furs?" she asked.

I replied that I would be only too grateful if she would teach me.

"I'll show you how," she said assuringly, "but if any man sees you working here and asks if you belong to the union you tell him you get work from the factory and you're a boss."

As I was only too delighted at the prospect of securing employment so soon, I promised to follow her instructions, though I did not understand them; so she took me into the combination parlor and factory where a pile of rabbit skins were waiting to be lined. She showed me how to sew the hooks and eyes on the capes without pulling the hair through to the other side of the skin, and while I was trying my hand at it, she brought in a mattress and a dirty old blanket, which she laid on the floor behind the door. Then she called her husband into the kitchen and told me to go to bed with my child.

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After I had lain down, they brought in a lamp and began to work; but I soon fell asleep and knew no more, until I became conscious of a bright light shining in my face and awoke to find that the sun had risen. The hands of the clock were pointing at five; so I rose quickly, washed my face and hands and dressed, and then sat down to work beside my boy who lay sleeping peacefully. When the woman arose it was seven o'clock, and she was greatly surprised to see the pile of capes in front of me.

"You must have got up very early," she said. To which I replied that I was up at five o'clock. "You needn't worry," she said knowingly, "you won't go hungry in New York if you can work like that." Her assurance stimulated me to even greater energy; for the prospect of work and an honest living was like sunshine after gloom.

Breakfast that morning,—and every morning, too, for that matter,—consisted of some frische baigel (little hard rolls like doughnuts), some milk and sweet butter; and when the meal was finished, my new friends showed me

how to use the sewing machine, and how to attach the shoulders to the capes. From there I was advanced to lining them—the highest art of all; and it was but natural that pride should begin it's puffing process, when my commercial education and my progress in it kept such flattering pace with each other.

However, the memory of that button-hole prevented pride from interfering with the pace, and my mistress was so delighted with my progress that she promised me work as long as I would stay with her. She went further in the enthusiastic expression of her pleasure and offered to pay me five dollars a week, in addition to board for myself and Dady. Five Dollars a Week! I would soon be rich on that! I had never earned so much in so short a time except the guinea in the London theatre—that solitary guinea. "Surely, America is 'the land of the free;'" I thought.

The days rolled by, each bringing its work and consequently its pleasures, for the muffs and capes poured in as fast as we turned them out, and I was very happy. One day, while we sat working diligently in the combination

### The Jewish Quarter.

parlor and factory, a sharp rap at the door made us start suddenly. I opened the door and two burly men entered without ceremony.

"Working here, eh?" said the larger one in German, who was evidently the spokesman.

"Yes," I replied, "we're working. What of it?"

"What of it?" he repeated. "Don't you know there's a strike on and I'm the Walking Delegate?"

"Glad to see you, Mr. Delegate," I said with mock courtesy. "Please come in and sit down."

"Say, you're a little devil, ain't you? Do you belong to the Union?" he asked.

His question reminded me at once of the injunctions laid upon me when I first became a member of the household; and, as I glanced at the mistress, I could see that she was quaking with fear lest I had forgotten them. The situation had its novelty and I could not resist the temptation to enjoy it; accordingly I announced somewhat defiantly, that I did not belong to the Union. The Walking Delegate looked at the mistress, then at me and back to

the mistress again. He straightened himself up very grandly and said, "Then I guess I'll have to book you for ten dollars."

"I guess you won't," I replied saucily, and I too assumed the grand air, as I seated myself beside the machine where I had been working.

"And why not, my pretty one?" asked the Walking Delegate as he came over and took up his position in front of me.

"Why not?" I repeated. "Why, because I'm a boss."

"You a boss!" he exclaimed. "And where were you a boss before?"

"In Chicago," I replied, confident that if he pressed me hard I could recall some of the things Dr. Leiter had told me of that place.

"Oh! You came from Chicago did you? Well your husband was the boss, not you," he announced emphatically.

Just then little Dady, attracted by the loud talking, came in from the kitchen, and seeing a man standing before me, rushed to my side. He threw his little arms across my lap and, looking up at the man, he said defiantly.

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"You leave my mamma alone or I fix you. My mamma boss."

"So, you'll fix me, will you?" Said the Walking Delegate as he pinched his cheek. "Say, you're the kind we want in the Union, comrades that can fight. Are you a Union man?" he asked good-naturedly.

"You go way, I don't want to talk to you," Dady replied. "Go way and leave my mamma alone."

The delegate looked at him for a moment as if turning something over in his mind. "Where's your papa, sonny," he asked suddenly.

"Popper's dead," he replied.

"Ah! Na! That's it, is it!" he exclaimed. "So you're a widow, and that's why you're your own boss! You continued the business after he died!"

"Yep," I answered unconcernedly, and my reply seemed to satisfy him, for only a boss would dare answer him in that fashion. Beside, my Dady's innocent testimony was of the most convincing nature and prompted the man to form his own conclusions, which I did not deny. So I carried my part to a successful

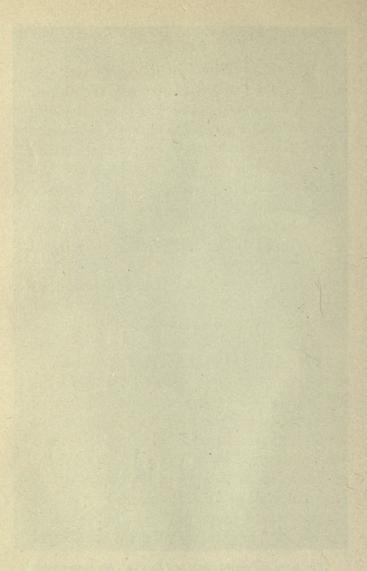
end and the two delegates left, closing the door behind them quite deferentially. When they were gone my mistress jumped up and down with joy at my success. Had I blundered, she would have been obliged to pay a fine for employing non-union labor, and I would have been driven from my work.

The strike lasted nearly a month, and by the time it ended, the fur season was over and I was again without work. By dint of hard labor I had managed to save a small sum from my earnings, to which I added a smaller amount by turning again to the old standby of button-hole making. But the work in that line was slack; and finding myself with too much leisure I decided to see if there was not something else I could do. I was tired of having plenty of work for a short time and then no work for a long time, and I longed for something better to do for Dady's sake.

Glancing through a German paper one day, I read the advertisement of a school for midwifery. I thought it over and finally decided it must be a very good business; so the next day I answered the advertisement, and being



"You leave my mama alone or I fix you. My mama boss."



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told I could enter the school by paying ten dollars, I paid the money and began my studies. They gave me books to read at home, and with the assistance of a German woman next door, who helped me with the larger words, I found that I could make considerable progress. All the time I could spare from my work of making button-holes, I spent in reading and studying those books; and, as there was little to do at the school, I did all the studying at home.

One day, a baby that lived not far from us was taken ill, and the mother declared that some one had looked at it with "the evil eye." The superstitious Jews believe that if any one looks at a baby without saying "Kanen hore," and the child happens to fall sick, it is a victim of "the evil eye"; and either the mother or some relative will run with the baby's cap to a Rabbi, or to some woman believed to be gifted, that a prayer may be said over the cap and the child restored to health. I was aware of this superstition when I met the mother of the sick baby rushing through the street, moaning and wailing that her child would die if she did not

have a prayer said over it's cap, so I stopped her, and taking the cap from her hand, I bowed my head very solemnly over it and muttered to myself: "Your mother is a fool—and your father must be a bigger one—and I hope you will have more sense than both of them—and when you grow up you will not believe in these superstitions."

To make a greater impression I wrinkled my forehead, raised my eyes skyward and pressed my lips tightly together; then, suddenly handing the cap back to the woman I commanded her to hurry home, place the cap on the baby's head without speaking a word to any one, lick its forehead three times and put it to bed. She did so; and a few hours later the child awoke, bright eyed and well as ever. I had cured my first case—a tired baby.

It was soon known throughout the Jewish quarter that I could "Sprechen nahores" (remove an evil spell); and, as some had heard that I was studying midwifery, I was looked upon as a highly educated, refined and religious woman. I continued to study, and my increasing reputation served to support us through

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the entire winter and pay my fees at the school.

I was delighted that the distasteful work on button-holes and furs was now behind me, and I was permitted to look forward to better things. There had been other times when the future looked bright only to darken again, but I felt that now I was truly in a better way, for progress seemed to depend more on myself than on some one else's fancy.

My past experiences with these people, the only class I had ever known, had proved conclusively to me that to live always with them was an impossibility; that somehow there was that within me which made them seem different. Oh, so different! Though their religion calls for supreme cleanliness, they are far removed from it; though they are naturally faithful and honorable toward each other, they know not how to display it in any but their own coarse ways. Their habits of life in general their jokes and their quarrels, had been offensive to me from my very childhood; and the thought of raising my boy among such surroundings filled me with apprehension.

"Away! Away from these people then for my baby's sake!" And with such thoughts I bent to my studies with a will—a will that conquers—a will that wins.

# BOOK THE SECOND.

HOPE.

# SCOK THE SECOND

dinon

### CHAPTER I.

#### DR. MINNA.

"My dear girl; I congratulate you on your success. I am proud of you." Harry's face beamed with pleasure and satisfaction. "There were some women in the sitting-room and they think you are a marvel. I'm blest if the old lady doesn't believe the baby is pretty because you are."

"Careful, Herr Dokter," I replied. "You mustn't let enthusiasm for your protégé run away with your good sense."

"Oh, I know all about that. But really your professional conduct with the patient was all that anybody could want. They told me they were very much pleased; you showed such delicacy and tact. You are a born doctor."

"Well, if the bank account is any criterion, Harry, I am a success. It is growing to

undreamed proportions. But I have you to thank for that."

"Nothing of the kind. That bank account is the result of brains and talent—and application. If all the others in that night-school make as good doctors as you have, the experiment will be a success. But you go to bed now, you must be tired after your long vigil in the sick-room. Besides, it is late and there is nothing so wearing on a doctor as this night service. Leben sie wohl Frau Dokter, see you in the morning."

He left me in his usual breezy way, and I sat down to rest for a moment.

It is good to know Dr. Leiter. His generous nature and vigorous way of doing things are irresistible. Ever since I resigned myself to his direction, things have changed. So much has happened in the space of three short years, and all because the old stubborn resistance is laid aside. Can it be possible that I am the same ignorant person who, three years ago treated a dirty patient in the Jewish Quarter of New York for "Grippe" when he had the small-pox? After all, that was a fortu-

#### Dr. Minna.

nate mistake; for, though it did get me into trouble with the city medical authorities and nearly put me in prison, it forced me out of New York and made me listen to Harry's advice. It is true that the very things which cause trouble and anxiety often turn out for the best. But that small-pox case is a standing joke with Harry, though I owe my escape to his influence and timely presence in New York.

What a lot beside, I owe him and his love for me! And I would be so happy if he hadn't told me he had ordered that engagement ring. I cannot accept it. I cannot. Even if I were ready to marry without love, he deserves a better fate—a woman who can love him as he deserves. Such a noble soul! Gratitude for what he has done for me is not enough. Why can't I love him! He would make any woman happy. Such a protector! So quick to see things and decide. So clear in his judgment, even if he is impetuous.

Harry was right after all, for everything has proved that a doctor's style of living has much to do with his success. How I rebelled at his extravagance in furnishing this apartment so

lavishly—at taking an apartment at all! What a fool I was to think that a doctor in a great city like Chicago could build up a decent practice and live in cheap quarters where she did her own housework! Harry was right when he said it would be useless for me to attempt to engage in the medical profession unless I was ready to locate in a proper neighborhood in my own apartment. "When you are better acquainted with the profession, you will learn that appearances count a great deal," he said, and I can see now that I certainly did know very little about it—about anything in fact. It is always the unconscious ignorant who knows more than anybody else—especially a woman. She fights for her independence, that great treasure to some women—and fails to realize that fighting is the very thing which keeps her dependent, or at leasts retards her progress. I know a good deal more now, and I can see that resistance spells stagnation.

But that servant! What a piece of extravagance it seemed to the green girl of three years ago! Now, Lena is wholly indispensable to me, for how could I attend to my pro-

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fessional visits without a housekeeper and some one to look after Dady? Dear little fellow; how he does grow while his mother is so busy! How proud he is when Harry calls him "General!" Harry must have foreseen all that too, for he made me take his uncle's old housekeeper. "She will take an interest in you," he said, and he was right.

It is wonderful when I look back at the night we arrived in Chicago, and think of all that has happened since—the marvelous depot and the crowd of people; I was so tired after the long journey. What a cheery welcome Harry's mother gave me and how she laughed when he introduced me as the "famous smallpox doctor of New York!" I was so ashamed; but she, dear old lady, kissed me as a mother would a daughter and made me feel so relieved. It was perfectly clear that she was uncertain about me, whether I was such a woman as she would choose for her son; but she accepted me for his sake. Then that wonderful dinner at the hotel when Harry made me drink my first cocktail and introduced me to that undreamed delicacy-blue

points. How hungry I was, and how marvelous it all seemed!

But the pleasantest memory of all is that shopping tour in Harry's buggy-his "plainlooking turn-out.' How he whisked me about in his breezy way and wouldn't listen to my How recklessly extravagant it protests! seemed to go about in the big store and select all these things for my apartment! The mahogany furniture for the dining-room—the fixings for my bedroom-everything seemed so costly and I was so dazed at the thought of paying back my debt. "You leave all that to me," Harry said, and I can see him now when he said, "I was in the same position once with my uncle who paid my way through college and then established me in my profession. I was only fifteen when he took me up; and when I graduated from college he sent me to study medicine and then paid all my expenses during the first year of practice."

How well I remember that first dinner in my own little home—such a marvel of fairyland it was—when Harry told me all these things! "He was a stranger to me," I remem-

#### Dr. Minna.

ber he said, "but I always called him uncle. If it hadn't been for him I wouldn't be in a position to help you now. Look at me!" he said, and I can see him now,—so serious; "Look at me! Do you think you ought to be more independent than I? I am a man; and do you think it hurt me to accept his help? No, not in the least. I am better for it; for now that he is dead the remembrance of my own case has made me glad to help others. You are a woman and alone in the world. Are you going to tell me that you want to fight the world unassisted and accept no help in the start? Don't worry, my dear girl; you'll have enough to contend with."

How his argument impressed me! After that I was helpless and let him work out my problems as he thought best. But I made him promise he would let me pay him back when the income from my practice warranted it. That was my last faint struggle for independence—and he won't let me pay him yet.

Then there was the night school. How lucky the Chicago authorities decided to open that school just when I was ready to go there!

To be sure some of the students are carpenters, tailors and clerks, all expecting to be great doctors; but then the training was good and my success proves it. Dear Harry! Such a noble soul! I must learn to love him. I must. He deserves it. Everything I have, everything I am, is due to him.

Then there's Ella; she's had a large hand in it too. I can see her now when Harry presented me to her, too, as the "famous smallpox physician of New York." Will he never get done plaguing me about that! How she laughed! And how sweetly she said, "I hope you didn't bring any of the small-pox with you." And then Harry assured her that she needn't worry, that if I had, I would cure them all. But she was so good and helped me select all the little things for housekeeping that only a woman knows about; and when I protested against buying so many things she said she was under Harry's orders and had to do it. Poor girl! She had already learned to obey him. She already knew that it made no difference what we thought or felt, he did what he thought best and it was useless to resist.

#### Dr. Minna.

And then that first night in my parlor when she played the piano! I thought it strange that her playing had so much sadness in it; but now I know, for I have seen many proofs that she loves him. Poor girl! It must have been a trial to see the man she loves show a preference for some one else. And he shows it so plainly even in her presence. I must rebuke him for that. Ella is good, she is tender and she has the soul of an artist. No wonder her pictures are a success! She has so much sympathy and feeling. But Harry says she doesn't paint as she did. He says that lately she won't touch the brush. Poor fellow! He little imagines that she is eating her heart out for him and I am the cause of it. I wish I had known all these things when I sent that letter of gratitude to Harry. I'm afraid my feelings ran away with me and I gave him too much encouragement. If I had only known!—But then all he had done for me overwhelmed me with such gratitude. And I only thought to repay him with appreciation. If I had only known!

Perhaps all this has something to do with

Ella's anarchistic tendencies. She's taught me a great deal about their noble hopes for the working man. Poor things! They are so oppressed! Their meetings are certainly very interesting. The first one was a shock, but now I wholly sympathize with them even if they are Anarchists. And she has promised to take me to another meeting to-morrow night. To-morrow night! Why it's to-morrow now!

I must go to bed; I've so\_much to do to-morrow.

### CHAPTER II.

### RED FLAG ELOQUENCE.

"Fellow workmen of Chicago, it is time we open our eyes and see for ourselves how these brutal capitalists are slaughtering our sons and ruining our daughters!"

The speaker's voice rang strong and clear through the hall and thrilled me to rapt attention.

"They are only young girls," he went on, "and they are not properly fed; while those men do nothing and live high by our hard labor. Many of you have come here to-night without overcoats and it's cold. You've worked in the shops all day, making coats for the rich to wear, while they pay you starvation wages and you come here without enough clothes to keep you warm. Are you going to stand this any longer? Are you going to let these people drive your wives to take in washing and help you keep your children from going naked in the street? You, shoemakers,

you work in the factories to make shoes for others to wear; but look at your own! You, tailors, you work at the bench to make clothes for others to wear; but look at your own! You, bakers, you work at the ovens to feed the rich; but look at your own children, half starved! The law of this country says that every man is equal in the eyes of the law. Are we equal? Can you ask for better wages and get them? Every man of you has the right to provide for his children by the sweat of his brow, but are you doing it? The boss who owns the business pays you small wages for long hours. The landlord who owns the house robs your earnings for big rents for small lodgings. The merchants who own the goods make you pay big profits on cheap articles. What can you do? Can you refuse to pay? No, you are put out! Can you do without the goods? No, you'll freeze, you'll starve! Can you ask for more wages? No, they'll discharge you! Comrades, it is time for us to make these people fear us-fear to starve us-fear to cheat us! We are a strong body if we stand together! Are you ready?"

## Red Flag Eloquence.

The speaker was a young man with that power of voice and gesture to move a multitude; and as he shouted his threats and his questions, he walked up and down the platform addressing his audience with that fiery eloquence that stirs the hearer to action whether he will or not. His last question brought the audience to their feet; and with yells and cheers and waving of hats they shouted, "Yes, we are!"

A second speaker arose on the platform and addressed them in even more fiery language. He closed his speech with "Shoot the tyrants! Down with the police!" I could stand it no longer. I rose in my seat with Harry pulling at my skirt and calling to me to sit down, but I would not listen.

"Fellow workers!" I began; but the tumult drowned my voice. "Fellow workers!" I shouted; and some few who heard me cried "Sh! Sh! Hear the comrade! Hear the comrade!"

After a time the noise ceased and hardly knowing what I was saying, my cheeks burning as if they were on fire, I spoke.

"Fellow workers; I am only just come among you and the speakers here to-night have touched my heart."

"Hurrah!" the audience shouted. "Hurrah! Go on! Go on!"

The sea of faces turned toward me and I felt encouraged.

"I have not been in this country very long, I am from another land where the people are down-trodden; but I've been here long enough to know that you are the best paid workers on earth."

"Put her out! Put her out!" yelled the rabble Anarchists.

"Go on! Go on!" the leaders shouted.

"Listen," I continued when the uproar subsided. "I say these things not to belittle you, but to turn your sympathy toward your more unfortunate brothers. In Russia, where I come from, the wages you get would make the average worker feel like a prince. You, shoemakers, you get in a week what your fellow workers in Russia get in six months! You, bakers, you receive in a month more than your brothers get in a year in Russia! And

### Red Flag Eloquence.

if they complain what do they get? They are beaten and cast into prison! When they rise to fight for their rights the soldiers of the government shoot them down like dogs! Here, you have the capitalists to fight, but the law is with you. There, they have the government to fight and there is no law with them. They ask for a voice in making the laws and they are beaten and cast into prison! They rise in defense of their rights and are shot down like dogs! They cry for bread and get the knout! Fellow workers, I want your help to assist those people. Help me to help them and I will help you to help yourselves!"

I sat down amidst loud cries of "Shoot the tyrants!" "Down with the Czar!" "Viva for Anarchy!" "Viva for Anarchy!"

A man approached me and, as I looked up at his towering figure, I saw to my astonishment that he was a Russian and a nobleman. Young and handsome, his bright, intellectual eyes looked me through and through, as though he would search my soul.

"Madame," he said in German, "I trust you will pardon my intrusion, but your words

have stirred me to a desire to know you better. I am a stranger here, and glad to meet a countrywomen. But, tell me, pray, what part of Russia do you come from, and who is it belonging to you that suffers in Siberia?"

"I know of no one belonging to me who suffers in Siberia. But does it matter? Is not the whole land full of horrors? Are not the people slain in the streets? Can one help feeling for them though they are not brothers or sisters?"

"And what do you propose to do?"

"All that in good time. But tell me what part of Russia do you come from and what brings you here?"

"All that in good time," he replied with a smile. "I come from Moscow and St. Petersburg. I rule in both cities and divide my time between them. Since we are both from Russia, I pray your further acquaintance. My card," he said, bowing graciously, "I have the pleasure."

I took the card and glancing at it, read the

Count Oscar Karapot.

### Red Flag Eloquence.

In the lower left-hand corner was his family crest; and the initials of his titles, which followed the name, showed him to be a prince and connected with the royal house.

Harry stepped forward and taking the card officiously from my hand presented his own to the Count. "I am Dr. Leiter," he said, "and this lady's guardian. I shall be happy to see you at my residence to morrow evening, if convenient."

No one could look at the man and his card and doubt him. I extended my hand, which he grasped warmly. "I shall ask Dr. Leiter to bring you to my apartment to-morrow evening," I said, and withdrew my hand from his lingering clasp.

Outside the night was cold and crisp; and the snow crunched beneath our feet as it used to do in the old, old days in Russia. The events of the evening had fired me to a fever of excitement and I failed to feel the cold. Somehow that man lingered in my mind; and I was conscious that he had created in me a feeling that his coming into my life meant more than a passing acquaintance. "What is

this feeling that has come over me? What does it mean?"

Harry broke the silence. "Well, you have put your foot in it. You're an Anarchist now, full-fledged. You'll have the whole pack of them down on you to make you keep your word."

"She did just right," said Ella, "I just felt every word she said. The working classes of to-day suffer great hardships and their condition is growing worse. I believe just as they do, that the working man will never have a chance until the capitalists realize that they are an outraged class to be feared. It's a shame the way these poor hard-working men are made to suffer!"

"Ella is right," I said. "The capitalists are in danger, but it is their own fault. They are pressing the working men too hard and cutting their wage, while they give large sums to charities and build cathedrals and big churches. I'm afraid this affair is going to turn out to be very serious, and pretty soon, for the working men are getting excited. I fully sympathize with them and I shall go to more of their

## Red Flag Eloquence.

meetings. I want to do something for them and for their brothers in Russia. I've been studying this subject for some time!"

"You sly girl," said Harry. "Here I've been watching your success as a physician and never dreamed you were thinking of anything else. I'll see you don't get ahead of me again." And he laughed in his good-natured way. Nothing is worth treating seriously in Harry's estimation.

"Please don't call me a girl, Harry. I may have been once, but things have changed me since I came here. Three years in Chicago can teach a person a great deal, especially if that person has already suffered much. Here we are at Ella's street," I added, by way of changing the subject.

When we had seen her safely home we went on toward my apartment.

"If the Count comes to see you to-morrow night, don't forget to bring him around, will you, Harry? I want to get better acquainted with him."

"Ah, ha! So you've fallen in love, have you! This is going to be nice. Why do you

want to invite the poor man to see you? You'll only freeze him after you know him."

"Why do you think I'll freeze him after I know him?"

"I'll tell you, Minna; you'll get the young man to come, he will fall in love with you, and then you'll tell him that you cannot love him. I'm afraid, my dear girl, when it comes to real love, you don't know what it is."

"Are you speaking of love, Harry? Then let me tell you something. The muscle in that heart which you are boasting of, is well developed in me. Those funny strings which construct its four chambers are in the best order. Three of these chambers are already inhabited; one by my unknown mother and one by my boy. In the third I have packed you and Ella; and the fourth—is still vacant. While you are speaking of love, I want to assure you that I do know what love is. To fill that one vacant chamber, it would take wagon loads, car loads, oceans and worlds of love. Love, so powerful and strong that before it the whole world trembles in fear. Love so glorious and bright that the sun in comparison

## Red Flag Eloquence.

is but a candle light. A love pleading, soft, and innocent as a child; intoxicating, noble and great. A love that asks no questions; that trusts and does not fear. A love that will sacrifice everything—parents, wealth, title and country—and, facing all, bravely say, 'Yes, I love and do not care.' Such a love would make of a dwarf and craven, a giant and hero. Oh, Harry! To love as my mother loved once and forever! I am craving and starving for one spark of its fire. Do you think you can give it? Ah no, my boy, you can only be my brother. Take my advice and marry Ella. When such a woman loves, there is none other to compare with her."

"Except the girl who loves the whole world too much to select a single object for her affection. When is your next meeting?"

"Friday night. But why do you always change that subject?"

"Never mind about that. I'll be at the meeting. Leben sie wohl," he said cheerily and left me at my door.

### CHAPTER III.

#### COUNT KARAPOT.

"Well, Minna, I've consulted your wishes this time and brought the Count; but I can tell you I didn't have to coax very hard. He was restless enough until I suggested that we come over here."

Harry proceeded to make himself comfortable.

"Well, you've taken a long time to get here, but I'm glad you came. Count Karapot, this is my friend Miss Stevens. We are a happy family here and I hope you will make yourself at home."

The Count bowed to Ella with courtly grace.

"I see you survived your Anarchist experience of last evening," he said, grasping my hand warmly, "you look as fresh as though you were accustomed to stirring audiences with fiery speeches every night."

## Count Karapot.

"Perhaps I am," I replied; "but I do feel the effects of it, though apparently I am fortunate enough not to show it. Won't you be seated?"

"They say physicians ought to know best how to care for themselves," said the Count as he seated himself in a big leather chair; "but my experience has been that they give pills and advice freely to others, but take little themselves. How long have you been practicing, may I ask?"

"Three years in Chicago; but I had a little professional experience in New York before I came here."

"I should say she did," laughed Harry. "She nearly killed a man. Why, she treated a patient for Grippe when he had the small-pox, and then got into trouble with the Health Board."

"Now don't tease her any more about that," Ella pleaded. "Aren't you ever going to let her forget it?"

"Never mind, Ella, that was the best thing that ever happened to me. I must inform you, Count, that I owe my escape and subsequent

success to this teasing friend of mine. But you mustn't mind him, he's only an overgrown boy."

"Pray, tell me," asked the Count, "is it only four years since you left Russia? If that is not asking too much?"

"No, indeed, Count Karapot, we are accustomed to speak freely here; and it is my favorite theory that the only way to be understood, the only way to keep people from making a mistake about you, is to tell the truth about yourself—always. It is now eight years since I left Russia. I was in Hamburg three years, in London eight months, a year in New York and three years here."

"You must have been very young when you left Russia, then. It is surprising to me that you are such an advanced revolutionist."

"I've carried enough of my childhood with me to last the rest of my life, and to make me teach my boy never to set foot on Russian soil."

"You have a child?" asked the Count in surprise. "Why you are only a child yourself."

"Yes, I have a son. He was born to me in Hamburg when I was but a mere girl; and the

# Count Karapot.

suffering my child and I went through could only happen to those unfortunate enough to be born a Russian Jew."

"Why, last night I heard you pleading for your country. I am eager to know what it can be that has embittered you so against your fatherland."

"No, Count, excuse me; it was not my country but the unfortunate people of black Russia that I pleaded for. My country is America and it shall be the home of my child. You ask what has embittered me so? Here, read this silken sheet, written by a suffering Jewess in your country many years ago. It was given to me in a locket that was hung about my neck on my wedding day, when I was thirteen and married against my will to a hopeless looking Yeshiva Bocher. Harry, don't leave the room. Ella please stay here, you both know all about it."

"Oh, we're only going to the dining-room after some fruit!"

"This is sad," said the Count, handing back the letter. "The signature is blurred. Has it always been so?" "Yes. It has always been blurred and I have never been able to decipher it."

"It is too bad, that you must be kept in ignorance of your mother's identity. How she must have suffered!"

"I have always planned that some day I would go to Russia and locate my parents if possible. That day has arrived; for now that my profession has placed me in a position to carry out my plans, I am arranging to start for Russia immediately."

"That is fortunate, indeed; for I expect to return there myself very shortly. Perhaps I can be of service to you."

"If you could give me any aid, Count Karapot, I would be only too grateful."

"I shall place myself at your service gladly; and I am sure I can help you a great deal. The mission for my government which has kept me in this country for nearly two years, is now almost ended. When you are ready to start for Russia, pray, let me know. I shall be only too happy to provide you with all necessary letters."

"I thank you, Count Karapot, I shall indeed

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be glad to avail myself of them. You speak of a mission for your government. Did they send you amongst the Anarchists here to look for firebrands?"

"Firebrands, my dear Madame, are not to be found among the Anarchists. I sought some one in the interest of my government; and I had reason to believe that the person I sought might be found among them. But permit me to say that when you know more about the Anarchists, you will find they are an ignorant set, unworthy of serious consideration."

"Oh, Count! Don't you think you are too severe on them?"

"No, I'm not. There are, no doubt, a few sincere people among them, but very few, especially here in America. Your Anarchists are composed of two classes; the leaders who make a great noise with their fiery speeches, and the honest working men who are led astray by them. The first are a lazy set who live on the earnings of the second. Believe me, my dear Madame, they are a lot of cowards. Just shoot beans and you will see them run."

"I thank you, Count Karapot, for your warn-

ing and the kindly interest you have shown in my affairs."

"Not at all. Not at all. I consider it a duty to do all I can to recompense that wrong of my fatherland. I shall ask you, however, to defer your departure until the arrival of a letter which I expect from Russia in three weeks. I shall then be able to accompany you, at least as far as New York, and see you safely on board the steamer."

"Oh, Count Karapot, I am afraid that will put you to too much trouble. Please don't inconvenience yourself on my account."

"Pray, don't speak of it. I shall be only too happy to see you safely started on your mission to the fatherland, your great wish at last fulfilled."

"Your pardon, Count Karapot. You mean a part of my great wish. The other, the more difficult of fulfilment, may never be realized."

"I beg of you not to look at it in that light. Surely, if the wishes of your friends can influence it, the fulfilment will be far beyond your expectation. I bid you good-night."

# Count Karapot.

"Wait a moment," Harry called, "I'm coming too. Good-night, girls." And they left together.

"Minna," Ella asked when they had gone, "don't you think you were a bit too unreserved with the Count?"

"No indeed. You know I always like to tell people the truth about myself as soon as possible; and besides, I feel an impulse, stronger than I can resist, to have the Count think well of me. He seems like a long-lost brother."

"Well! I always liked you, Minna, but now, I love you."

"And why do you especially love me tonight?"

"Because I see that you like the Count better than you do Harry."

"I should think you would be angry with me instead of glad. But where did you get that ring?"

"I found it on your dresser this evening and, as you didn't seem to want it, I slipped it on my finger. Was it very wrong in me to do it?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Did Harry see it there?"

"Yes. He noticed it when we went to the dining-room while the Count was reading your mother's letter."

"And what did he say?"

"Oh, Minna! How can I ever tell you! I'm so happy! He asked me where I got it and I told him how I found it and that I didn't mean him to see it. He looked very serious for a moment and then he said—Oh, Minna! How can I tell you!"

"Go on, dear heart, go on. Tell me all about it."

"Well, he said he had tried in every way to make you love him, but he thought it was about time to give it up. He said he could see that you would never care for him in the way he wanted, and now that the Count had made such an impression, there was no chance for him. Then he turned to me and said, so seriously, 'Ella, I've always had a fancy for Minna, but I guess it was a mistake. I'm afraid we are not meant for each other. If you'll take her place I'll do my best to be to you what I expected to be to her.' And then I broke down and cried before he could say

### Count Karapot.

any more. I would rather see him dead than married to another woman."

"My dear, dear girl. I congratulate you. Harry is a noble fellow and I am deeply grateful for all he has done for me; but it is impossible for me to love him, noble as he is. Perhaps I ought to feel differently but I can't, I can't. When will the wedding take place, befor I go to Russia?"

"Harry says he leaves all that to me. When do you expect to start?"

"Within a month; and it grieves me so to think of leaving my Dady behind. But I don't know where I'm going nor where I'll end; so I think the wisest plan will be to leave him with you. I shall know then that he is in good hands. But don't take too good care of him, he might forget his mother."

"That needn't bother you. Remember, you are leaving me a big boy to take care of, too. Go ahead and follow your plans. We will take good care of Dady and remind him often of you."

"Dear Ella, I have looked forward to it for a long time; and now that I can well afford to

go I can hardly wait for the time to start. Can you blame me for making the desire to find my parents the one great passion of my life?"

"No indeed. I would do the same, Minna, were I in your place."

"I have dreamed of it, Ella, I have longed for it. I have pictured myself starting on my lonely search. I have fancied myself laying my head on my mother's breast and crying with her; forgiving her for any fancied wrong she may have done me. I long to find her, and throwing my arms about her neck, to tell her I, too, am a mother and can understand her suffering. Oh, mother! My mother! Where are you? Where can I find you to lay my bleeding heart at your feet? They tore your infant from your arms, but her heart they cannot tear from you. My father was a Christian and you a Jewess; but your child was the offspring of love. Oh, mother, come to me! Come to me!"

Ella, weeping too, led me gently to my bed.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### THE FATHERLAND.

A MONTH of anxious preparation, and I am on my way to find my mother. How sweet that name sounds to me now that she is drawing nearer! Is it all a dream?

Three weeks of weary travel, and the spires of St. Petersburg glisten in the sun. Two hours more, and I stand face to face with Count Karapot and his mother.

"Why, Count Karapot! How is it you are here before me?"

"Your steamer was delayed two days, and as I traveled by a faster line, naturally I arrived before you. Mother, this is the young lady we are expecting from America; she speaks German. Madame, this is my mother, Madame Karapot."

"My son was worried because your steamer was so late. I hope your delay was not caused

by stormy weather. The Count claims that the ocean was very smooth."

"We had no storm, Madame, but the ocean was very rough. I presume that was the cause of our late arrival."

"Apartments are arranged for you and you are welcome at the castle. Oscar, I think we may start now for home."

A half hour's ride behind four well groomed horses, with as many footmen in livery, and we alight at the entrance to a stately palace in the center of beautiful gardens. Servants in livery move majestically about and all is pomp and splendor befitting the home of a prince. I feel like crying aloud, "Shame on a world where so few can live in luxury and so many live in want!" and the splendor of my apartments serves only to confirm the thought.

Everything has been done for my comfort, and the welcome, though formal, was all that I could wish; yet I am not happy. To be a guest in a great castle, where everything is so costly and rich, only serves to strengthen the contrast with all that is lowly and poor. To sit in state at dinner, while liveried servants

### The Fatherland.

move noiselessly about, was not meant for such as I,—I who have seen so much suffering, so much oppression.

Alone, after dinner in my apartments, I can only sit and think; until a light tap at the door of my salon, interrupts my train of thought. I open it and admit the Count.

"I ventured to intrude, Madame, to inform myself that everything has been done for your comfort. My mother bids me assure you that her wish is for the same."

"You are very kind, Count Karapot, and your mother too. I assure you there is nothing I can think of that I need. I would be glad, though, if you would teach me the proper etiquette for a guest in such a castle."

"When people behave as you do, naturally, they always act correctly. I am sure you have but to carry yourself as you did in your apartments in Chicago."

Again the Count bowed with courtly grace.

"You quite captivated my mother at dinner this evening, and there is no question about myself. I shall have the honor, I hope, to present you to His Majesty the Czar, before long. At present he is absent on one of his military inspections and it may be some months before he returns. However, there will be no lack of entertainment for you and I trust you will have no cause to complain of our hospitality."

"You seem to forget the mission which has brought me to Russia, Count Karapot."

"It is my hope, Madame, that we shall be able to surround your presence here with a charm that will make you forget it,—or at least its sadness. But I shall proceed at once to place the matter in the hands of secret agents, with instructions to leave no stone unturned in the search for your mother."

"Oh, Count! How can I ever thank you enough for all your kindness to me!"

"Pray, don't speak of it. My mother desires me to say, that, in the absence of His Majesty, she plans to give a small reception in your honor one week from to-night. I trust her plan will meet with your approval?"

"Certainly, Count Karapot. Be good enough to say to Madame Karapot for me that I am deeply sensible of the honor."

### The Fatherland.

"I thank you, Madame. Good-night."

A few days of rest, a few more days of preparation and the guests at my reception begin to arrive. A pompous, gold-laced flunky calls their names and titles and Madame presents them, one by one, with stately grace. Lords and ladies, princes, dukes and peers move on with courtly ceremony, until all have been presented and we mingle with our guests. Presently a hand is laid on my shoulder and a soft voice whispers, "Follow me."

Out in the garden the moon was shining brightly and the night was clear and calm. A white dress in an arbor, far removed from the castle, told me where to go; and I found there a Countess whose gaze I had seen following me as I moved about the room.

"Madame," she said, "I trust you will pardon my unceremonious summons, but I earnestly desire a few moments of privacy with you. I have been studying your face for some time and I think I see there a love for humanity and a sympathy for its sufferings. Am I right?"

"Indeed you are, Madame. I have seen

much, suffered much and thought much; and the more I learn the keener grows my sympathy."

"I thought so. And am I right in believing that you are filled with a desire to relieve their condition if only the means can be found?"

"Indeed you are. Quite right."

"In Russia, perhaps more than anywhere, this condition is due to a cause, easily removed when the proper time arrives. Caution and organized effort are needed, as well as earnest workers; and I am led to believe from my observation of you that you would be glad indeed to be an earnest worker in such a cause, if the opportunity were but present."

"Your observations are correct. Nothing could give me greater pleasure. I am a Russian by birth and I have suffered much at her hands. Tell me, I beg, how can I help to relieve the sufferings of others?"

"We have an organization here in Russia, known by the name of Nihilists. Perhaps you have heard of them; but, for fear that rumor may have given you a false impression, allow me to say that it is composed of noble

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men and women, people of wealth and birth, with whom the principles they stand for are matters of life and death. If you care to join in the noble work they are planning, I shall be happy to take you to the next meeting and stand sponsor for you there. Will you come?"

"Indeed I shall. When is the next meeting?"

"To-morrow night; and if you will meet me here about nine in the evening, I shall be glad to accompany you there. But let me caution you against speaking of the matter to Count Karapot. No doubt he is in sympathy with us, but he is extremely honest in all his dealings and a confidential friend of the Czar, whom he visits almost daily at the palace. It would be better for him not to know of your going to the meetings; it might distress him and possibly cause him trouble."

"My dear Countess, your words imply that you imagine the relations between me and the Count are closer than they really are. I am not engaged to him, as you seem to imagine, nor am I in any way bound to render him an accounting of my private affairs."

"Good! But are you proof against his questioning? You know if he should happen to discover that you are an earnest member of our society, or that you have secret meetings in the garden, he will question you very closely."

"I assure you I am proof against any such attacks."

"Very good! Will you swear to keep secret the transactions at our meetings and never divulge the secrets you will learn there?"

"Here is my hand; and I swear that the fear of death itself will never frighten me into revealing any of those secrets. I think I have shown by my earnestness that I am wholly in sympathy with your cause, and that you can depend upon me to protect it, with my life if need be."

"Bravo!" Like a phantom she disappeared at the sound of approaching footsteps. It was the Count.

"Have I disturbed you, Madame?"

"Oh, no indeed! I just came out her for a breath of fresh air. It is so warm in the room."

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"Was there not some one with you?"

"Only my maid. She left when she heard you coming."

"That is good. I was worried about you, Madame, fearing that perhaps you might fall under the influence of some of the people who are members of a secret society here. There are several present to-night who are under suspicion and closely watched. I beg of you to avoid them because they might get you into serious trouble. Beside they are rebelling without grounds."

"Rebelling without grounds?"

"Yes. They are protesting against the kindest ruler Russia ever had; and,—should anything happen to him,—the kindest they ever will have."

"You call Alexander the Second of Russia kind when he permits such conditions of inequality to exist?"

"To what conditions of inequality do you refer, Madame?"

"To several. The discrimination of your government in favor of the nobles, for instance. What are they? What do they do? They

hold offices by favor of the government and draw their pay; but the duties of those offices they neglect from day to day. From the cradle to the grave, every breath they draw, every fancy they fulfil is paid for by the government—by the people who support this idle aristocracy."

"What you say, Madame, is partly true. But you forget that many of them have estates inherited from their fathers."

"And where did those estates come from? How came they by them? By the favor of some Czar, who thought to reward a faithful subject for some service willingly performed. It may have been some deed of heroism, it may have been some deed of treachery against an innocent, helpless suffering soul. They were great people no matter what rascality they were ready to perform; and you know as well as I, Count Karapot, that the price of a wife's young beauty was none too great to pay for the favors of the Czar. The grandfathers and great-grandfathers of your titled nobility earned their riches by some such means as these; but they gambled away their

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fortunes and left what?—mostly debts. No matter how many generations have passed, nor how many are yet to come, your titled nobility is paid for—by the government at the expense of the people. Do you call that equality?"

"My dear Madame; how do you know these things?"

"My common sense teaches me to ask these questions and observation supplies the rest. Go to the rear of some dark alley! You will find there a tumbled-down shanty where a widow lives with her children, working hard to support them by the sweat of her brow. There are six of them; and their emaciated bodies are clothed in a coarse chemise. They know not the taste of meat, and skimmed milk they get but twice a week. This woman who starves herself for her children is a cigarette maker, or perhaps a dressmaker, and must have a license for which she pays the fortune of three or five rubles a year. And should she fail to pay her tribute yearly, she is cast into prison where her trial is delayed, or she is sent to Siberia to stay there for three, four or six

months, to be used by the soldiers as they please. What for? To satisfy the greed of the government. Do you call that equality? Can you blame these children when they grow up and turn Nihilists?

"Go to another quarter—a room in a miserable garret. There sits an old man of eighty, gray and bent. For seventy years he has patched shoes in this very neighborhood and raised a family in hardship. He is honest and industrious; but his labor of seventy years has not been productive enough to give him support for his old age. Yet he must pay a government license, be he eighty or a hundred years old; and, should sickness or other misfortune prevent it, he too would be cast into prison, to be chained to murderers and thieves. Do you call that equality?"

"My dear Madame; what you tell me is truly very sad. We who live in luxury are only too apt to forget the others who are less fortunate. You speak feelingly, Madame; and one can readily see that you have given much study to this subject. Permit me; my arm to the castle."

### The Fatherland.

"I speak feelingly, Count Karapot, because I was born in darkest Russia and raised in some of her misery. I am a citizen of the United States now; and having once seen the conditions of the masses there, I can only long for the time when Russia will do likewise."

"Poor child! You are distrustful of your surroundings; the past has offered you so little pleasure. But let us hope that the future will be more kind. I shall try to make you so happy here that you will grow to look upon this castle as your home. I bid you goodnight." He left me at the foot of the grandstairway.

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The Count kept his word. Balls, parties and receptions delay the search for my mother, and time sweeps on in a whirl of splendor and ceremony. But the more I see of them, the more I feel the shame of it all. Spring passes on into summer and the court life comes and goes; while I drink at the fountain of Nihilism and find it sweet to my taste.

Oh, to do something for humanity! To

serve the world as a ministering angel sent to relieve its suffering! Everywhere I go there are thousands in want and only a few in luxury. I see on every hand people downtrodden and oppressed; and Nihilism the only salvation for Russia. To help them I must help the cause. Up with the good cause, then! Life and liberty for the people!

Consumed with the fire of such thoughts, the American Socialist opened her arms with a welcome and took the Nihilists in.

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## CHAPTER V.

#### MY LITTLE FIRE-BRAND.

It is warm this evening. How pleasant it is to sit here in the quiet of the garden and think of all that has happened since I came to Russia! How little I thought that such a life of gaiety and excitement awaited me! Mercy! I am off from the right road altogether! I came here to search for my parents and instead I swing in castles and luxuries, in silks and laces, and associate, against my will, with my enemies. What a mistake it was for me to accept Madame Karapot's invitation to stay at the castle. It was very kind of the Count to influence his mother, but I should have known myself better. But then I was so surprised at seeing him in Russia when I thought him still in America.—or at least on the ocean, that I didn't realize what it meant.

And now I'm in the thick of it. I mingle with

dukes and duchesses—I shake hands with them and smile graciously when I always criticised such people. I don't really care for them. Then why do I do it? Why? Because I am forced to. I can see that very plainly. And what forces me? Is it Oscar? No, it can't be Oscar. Is it Madame Karapot? No, it can't be she, for I don't care for her or her opinions. How strange it is that this life comes so naturally to me! It seems as though this castle and these gardens have been mine for years as though I have been born and raised here. It doesn't seem new to me, and if I bring my past life into comparison, it seems like some horrid story I have read in a book.

These dukes and duchesses don't seem at all like strangers whom I've never met before. I feel as though I have known them all my life. Even Madame Karapot couldn't help noticing that, for she said only the other day: "How is it, Madame, you are so self-possessed? When we introduce our friends to you, you stand there so proud. Were you the Czar himself you could not receive them more coolly." Still my nature is not proud. I am not a

### My Little Fire-Brand.

proud person. I am sure of that. Yet Oscar often says I am a born princess. Only the other day he said that I would carry the title with grace. I wonder if he meant anything by that!

Sometimes I wish it were so. Not because I like the life. It doesn't appeal to me—I am sure of that. But wealth and influence are good things to have if one makes right use of them, and I am sure if I were a princess I would make right use of them. There is power in wealth if the rich only knew how to use it. Perhaps they'll learn some day. If they don't learn pretty soon they'll find to their sorrow that they are making mistakes. It makes my blood boil when I think of some of the things they are doing.

It is hard to live in poverty—I've tried that. Yet I don't want wealth for the position it brings. On the contrary, I was far happier when I was lining capes in New York than I am here in St. Petersburg, on exhibition—exposing myself for the criticisms of the very people who are criticised as the lowest of the low. Why should I dress to please others

when it doesn't appeal to me? I am an American citizen and have a right to do as I please.

Oh! How I long to get back to America! Ella said in her letter this morning that she and Harry were married last month and would go to New York on their honeymoon. How happy she must be! Why can't I be happy too! Is it possible that Harry was right and I don't know what love is? No, I do know what it is-I am sure of it. I sometimes wonder if I am not in love with Count Karapot. He attracts me very strongly. More than that—he exercises an influence over me I find it difficult to resist; and I admit I am pleased when he is near me. I cannot comprehend why it is that I am controlled by him. I seem to obey him as a sister would a brother; yet I hate the other men of his class. But then he is different. He is so noble and kind. His generousness and high-mindedness place him far above the other princes. He is a man according to my views and he has been very good to me.

I must write and tell Ella how generous he

# My Little Fire-Brand.

has been and what great receptions have been given for me. Dear me! How long it is since I have written. Why it is nearly a month! Shame on me! No wonder Ella complains that I have forgotten them! Dear soul! She threatens to adopt my Dady. What was it she said about that? No, it is too dark, I can't read her writing out here; but I'll read that part of her letter again as soon as I get back to the castle. Poor Dady! How I have neglected him! But then I've been kept so busy exposing myself that when I did get a chance to rest I had to do it. Beside, I have thought of him a great deal. Of course I have. How could I help it! Dear little fellow! I am uncertain whether to send for him or let him stay with Ella—my plans are so uncertain.

I've been here five months now and I've learned a great deal; but I haven't found my parents, yet. Ella will be disappointed when I tell her I am no nearer to them than I was when I started. Still, I have accomplished a great deal in another way, for the Nihilists say they couldn't succeed without me. Should I be the means of freeing Russia from her bond-

age, it would be a great deed well done; even if I do delay the search for my parents. The greatness of a nation ought to be higher than any personal craving. I swore to them that I would place my fealty above everything and I have kept my word; even to making use of Count Karapot's knowledge of the movements at the palace. What does a little sin like that amount to when it serves as a means to bring greatness to a nation! Besides it is absolutely necessary to know these things and we have no other means. It must be done. I must be faithful to my vow.

That was a wise plan for me to keep away from the meetings. But, look what the Countess risks in coming here to the gardens for the information! Yes, she is brave. Yes, she is ready to sacrifice her life if need be. I must not forget to ask the Count when the Czar is expected to return. Our plans are nearing completion and a few months more will settle the matter. I wish I could know how it will all end! They say that Russia will never be relieved from bondage until Alexander the Second is removed from the throne. They

# My Little Fire-Brand.

must know, for they are all noble people and deep thinkers; and I must be guided by their wisdom. They are so pure; they hate the evils of the court as much as they hate the wrongs of the government. How unselfish their great purpose is! And I shall do my share! But it certainly is a risk to meet the Countess in the arbor. We've met several times and nobody seems to suspect—not even Oscar who always misses me.

Dear fellow! He is too noble to entertain suspicious thoughts. What is the reason that he is so different from other nobles here? Why is he so kind? Does he do all these things for me because he knows what I have suffered and wants to give me a few months pleasure? I remember he said, right here in the garden, the night of my reception last spring, that he hoped to make my stay so pleasant I would come to look upon the castle as my home. I wonder if he meant anything by that! He has certainly been very attentive and he takes such pains to explain everything for me. How careful he is of me! Even to selecting books for me to read. Still his

behavior is always reserved and dignified. He is always the same; graceful, courtly, considerate.

Still I think he only does these things to keep me occupied while the search for my mother is being conducted. My poor mother! How she suffered! Is it any wonder I hate a country that discriminates against the Jews? Had she been a Christian they would not have torn her child away; for she was the daughter of rich parents and the equal of my father, whoever he was. That's it; to be born a Jew in Russia means sorrow. But perhaps it will all be right some day. If I ever find her I will right it. I shall see that the wrong which has been done her and her child shall be righted; and if a gentle tap will bring no answer, we shall use the knout. Yes, I must be active and not neglect.

Mercy! It must be late; the lights in the castle are nearly all out! I wonder how long I've been sitting here! I must hasten!

How still everything is! Even my footsteps resound on the gravel. No, those are not my footsteps!—It is some one else! Mercy!

# My Little Fire-Brand.

Can it be the Countess at this hour? How does she know I am here? Ah! It is Oscar! How he frightened me!

"Why, Count Karapot! How come you here at this hour?"

"That is the very thing I would like to ask you, Madame. I thought you had retired."

"I thought so too; but I came to my senses in the arbor just now to find I had been musing there a long time. Is it late?"

"Not so very late. Must you go in?"

"No, I feel restless to-night, and it is so beautiful out here, I hate to go in."

"I can appreciate your feeling, for I myself am restless and came out here for the very same reason. Suppose we take a little row on the lake. It looks so beautiful."

"Just the thing, Count Karapot. I should enjoy it very much. Is the boat far away?"

"No, there is one close by. Permit me to offer my arm."

"Thank you. Tell me, Count Karapot, were you musing too?"

"Yes. I must plead guilty. Be careful, Madame. Step in the center of the boat.

Just a moment until I get hold of it. There; now step in."

"Thank you. Now I'm all right. Do you sit in the middle and I in the end?"

"Yes, that is just right and very appropriate. Once again the Knight is stealing the Princess. Now, tell me what was the subject of your musing in the arbor just now? It must have been something beautiful, that kept My Highness in the garden at this hour and alone. What is it that disturbs your peace?"

"Oh, many things. I was far away in my thoughts; yet some of them were near-by too."

"May I venture to hope that the near-by thoughts were pleasant ones?"

"Oh, yes. That is, some of them were. How could I think otherwise than pleasantly of you, Count Karapot?"

"You honor me, Madame. I had not dared to hope that I could be so fortunate as to be the subject of your thoughts."

"Oh, I think of you often, Count Karapot. But you haven't told me yet what you were thinking about. Is it too secret to tell?"

# My Little Fire-Brand.

"I was thinking of you, Madame. I was thinking how different you are from the other women I have met. I cannot but wonder how one so young can have such thoughts."

"Oh, Count Karapot! You overwhelm me! Is that why you are so kind?"

"Perhaps my 'kindness,' as you call it has something of selfishness in it."

"Why, Count Karapot! What selfish motive could you have?"

"Perhaps it is a desire to find favor in your eyes and then to kindle the flame of a finer feeling with that little spark of grace."

"You lay your plans like a diplomat rather than a soldier storming the citadel."

"I am not one to make love in fine phrases, Madame; but if it were a citadel to be taken by storm I would throw myself into the siege with all the energy I possess. I love you, Madame. I worship you. To me you are as far above other women as the stars above the earth. Ever since you came here I have been conscious of but one thought, that this castle has never seemed so dear to me as now that it shelters you. Even in America, I was con-

scious of a subtle feeling, for I used to please myself in secret by calling you my little firebrand; and I have been watching for this opportunity to tell you that I love you and want you for my wife."

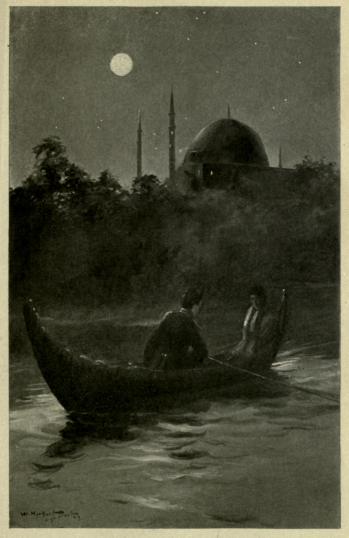
"Oscar!"

"Minna! My Minna! Can it be that you love me?"

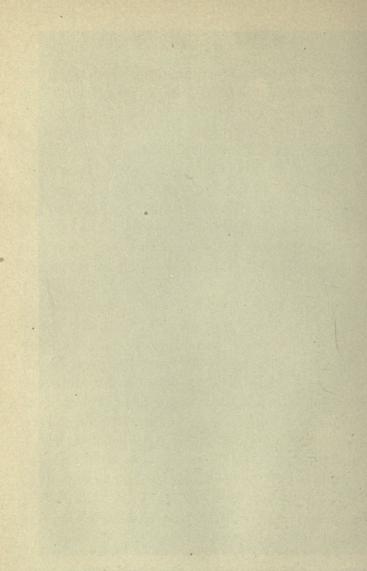
"I don't know, Oscar. I've been wondering if I do. When you are near me I am happy. I think more of you than any man I've ever met. When I am alone I long for you. I must confess that I've often asked myself the question. 'Am I in love with the Count?' At that, everything grows dark before me; I shiver and grow cold. I grow frightened and the castle fills with horrors. Is that love, Oscar? Do people feel that way when they love?"

"Yes, my darling, you love me. You have suffered so much, poor child, you are apprehensive. But do not worry, my love, I shall always be with you. Be of good cheer; you shall be happy from now on."

Silence. The silence that speaks more than



"At that, everything grows dark before me; I shiver and grow cold."



# My Little Fire-Brand.

words. The silence of Man and Nature, when Beauty wraps both in a dream.

" Minna."

"What is it, Oscar?"

"Take down your braids, sweetheart. I like to see you so. I wish you could appear at court like that when I present you as my bride. How jealous all the court ladies would be at my sweet maiden!"

"Why, Oscar! I didn't think you noticed such nonsense. Come, we must return to the castle."

"As you wish. I don't usually notice such things; but I saw you once in the garden, when you thought you were alone. I am jealous of my Minna, and I want everybody to see how beautiful she is. Be careful, dear. Don't step in the water.—Your hand.—There; —Now we are safe on land. Just a moment while I tie the boat. Now, take my arm to the castle."

"I had a letter from home this morning, Oscar dear, and Ella writes that she and Harry have gone to New York on their honeymoon."

"Indeed! They must be very happy. Dr. Leiter is a fine fellow. How is Dady?"

"He is well. But Ella threatens to adopt him because I have been so negligent about writing. That reminds me, Oscar dear, that I am not yet free to marry. What can we do about it? We must not forget that I am a Yeshiva Bochers' wife."

"Don't worry about that, sweetheart. We can easily obtain a divorce from a Rabbi before we are married. After that we will send for the boy and bring him up as he should be, in the castle."

"Thank you, Oscar dear, you are so noble and good. How different you are from the rest!"

"I am not different, you imagine it. Every man must wish for the happiness of his bride. It is but natural that I should do the same. Oh, yes! I have something very pleasing to tell you! Your presentation at Court is set for next March. How happy I shall be when I present you to his Majesty the Czar! Mother will be glad to hear of our engagement and that my wish has been fulfilled. Good-night, sweetheart, good-night."

# My Little Fire-Brand.

He left me at the foot of the grand stairway. "Good-night," he called again, as I reached the top.

\* \* \* \* \*

What have I done! I have accepted him! I am engaged! Engaged to a prince! Wealth, castles, royalty—are at my feet; yet I am not happy! He says I am in love; but I fear not. That throbbing of the heart that women feel toward the man they love, I miss. It is not there! I fear I have wronged you, Oscar! But you are a noble man—you shall never know! I, alone, am born to suffer!

The clock strikes two.

# CHAPTER VI.

#### THE ROYAL BALL.

"Now, Madame, don't partake of too many courses; you know this is your fast week and you must train your figure for the ball. Wait, Kirsheno, don't serve the poultry to Madame, she eats only fish this week."

"But, Madame Karapot, if I fast for a week I shall lose the pink cheeks you are so anxious about."

"Not at all. Beside, there are wines. You must take plenty of them all the week; they are good for the color."

"But I don't care for wines, Madame, nor do I care to 'train my figure' as you call it."

"Nonsense! Why, when I was presented to His Majesty I did not remove my corset for two days and two nights; and my maid came in every two or three hours to draw it in a half inch."

"Yes, mother, and I've heard you say that when you returned from your presentation, you fainted when the corset was removed."

"That will do, Oscar; such things do not concern the men. Besides, you should be very proud of your mother, for His Majesty was so pleased he gave Count Karapot, your father, a high mission in India as a reward for his great marriage."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, and I desire that your bride shall make as brilliant an impression as your mother did. You must remember, Minna, that you've only a week to prepare for your presentation and your court dress is not yet made."

"Court dress, Madame! Why, I've plenty of dresses to wear!"

"They won't do, at all. Your gowns are all cut too high. A court dress must be cut as low as possible."

"Madame! You don't expect me to appear in such a dress as that, do you? My modesty forbids."

"Modesty indeed! Who ever heard of a girl thinking of modesty when she is to be

presented to a Czar! When a woman has beauty, she should show it."

"Indeed, Madame! So that is the reason men look for secrecy in other women; their own wives are too much exposed. Truly, the Talmud is right, for it teaches that women should not dress to find grace in other men's eyes."

"The Talmud is very well for such persons; but it won't do for court ladies. It is their duty to dress for the men."

"If I am obliged to appear in such a costume, Madame Karapot, I shall not go at all."

"Minna! You forget that His Majesty's invitation is a command. You cannot refuse. Besides, as my son's future bride, it is your duty to him to be presented at court, and properly gowned. Kirsheno, serve more Bordeaux to Madame."

"Must I go, Oscar? Why can't you say I am ill?"

"That won't do, dear. I'm afraid you will have to go to this one, for you know I must present my future Countess to His Majesty—

the Czar. It is his wish and I must obey. After that you may do as you please."

"Well, I'll go if I may wear sleeves and a high bodice."

"Nothing of the kind, daughter. Your bodice must be cut according to custom and there must be no sleeves."

"Can she not have sleeves, mother? I am sure I've seen some of the court ladies appear in sleeves."

"Yes. Those appear in sleeves who have no pretty arms to show. However, if Minna will consent to the bodice, I will resign the sleeves."

"You will consent to that, dear. Won't you? You win your point on the sleeves."

"Oh, well, if I must, Oscar, I suppose I must; but I don't like it at all."

"Never mind, daughter, I am sure I dislike to resign the sleeves, for the court ladies will probably laugh at you and I do not relish the thought of my son's future bride being pointed out at the ball. Have you cautioned your maid to look after everything?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;No, Madame, not yet."

"You must do so at once. And don't forget to have her see to your necklace—the one with the diamonds and pearls. As for the gown. I have ordered a dark red velvet and you are to be fitted to-day. It will have a box pleat from the shoulders to the train, which must be regulation length. The bust must be cut pointed and set with jewels-sapphires rubies and yellow diamonds—the national colors. You must have the bottom gold bordered, eighteen inches deep, and trimmed with heavy rope lace of the same width, with the points up. I have ordered slippers to match; and don't forget to see that they fit as tightly as possible."

"How about the crown, mother?"

"I think, Oscar, that a single pointed crown with round corners would be proper."

"Oh, no, mother! You forget that I bear the title of prince; and as Minna will appear as my future Countess, I think she is entitled to a five point crown."

"But, Oscar, you are not married yet; and I question whether a *future* Countess is entitled to more than a single pointed crown."

"I think there can be no question about it, mother; besides, His Majesty commands that Minna shall appear in a five pointed crown."

"Oh, if that is so, His Majesty's commands must be obeyed. Now it means hurry and there is no time to lose, Minna. Only a week from to-night and there is much to do. You had better not wait for the other courses but go to your room and begin preparations at once. I shall drive with you to have your gown fitted."

\* \* \* \* \*

The busy week soon passes; and "prepared," according to custom, I am presented at Court. The palace is ablaze with a thousand candles that reflect the light from hangings of glass and gold. The floor is polished like a mirror and the great ball-room is one blaze of glory. Gay and brilliant, the throng has already arrived. Everybody is there, dukes, counts and officers, all in full dress uniform and resplendent with gold lace and decorations; while old and middle-aged ladies, with their yellow-brown and dried up skins, are everywhere in evidence, gay in their court

gowns and sparkling with jewels. Even the Grand Duke is there; and when I am presented to him, the cynosure of all eyes, the subject of much petty talk, the ball is informally opened and the small dancing begins. All is gaiety and frivolity; and the guests, moving in and out of the dance, make one grand kaleidoscopic picture of color,—brilliant, dazzling, resplendent.

A messenger arrives with word from the Czar that His Majesty is detained and will not arrive until late. Men pass in and out among the dancers and hold a whispered conversation. Presently the master of ceremonies announces that, as a special compliment to the "future Countess Karapot," and with the permission of the guests, who have consented to admit a dance not on the programme, two courtiers have offered to dance the Kosatzke.

A murmur of approval travels through the room; and, with clapping of hands and laughter, the two men take their positions in the center of the floor, and, facing each other, proceed with the dance. The dancers wave first one arm and then the other, all the while

tapping the floor with their heels. They fling their legs about and hop first on one foot, then on the other. They crouch on both heels and spring lightly to the toes, repeating the motion again and again, all the while warming up to their task until, with one wild, hilarious, dizzying whirl, the dance comes to an end amid shouts of "Brava!" "Brava!" and laughter and clapping of hands.

Then the regular dances are resumed, and I am whirled about the room by one courtier and then another, until, tired and warm, I beg to be led to the anteroom for a rest and a breath of fresh air.

"Madame," says my partner, "you are the belle of the evening. I congratulate your country on the possession of such women. Are there any more in America like you? If there are I must go there and get one for myself."

"You flatter me, sir. And allow me to tell you that there are plenty far more beautiful than your words indicate me to be."

"How could that be, Your Highness? Why, you have won every man here! Even the Grand Duke is smitten; he is going to ask you for the next dance."

"Indeed! And does the Grand Duke always send a valet ahead to break the ice for him? Please be so kind as to escort me to the window; it is cooler there. Thank you."

"I fear, Madame will take cold. Here, pretty one, my arm will protect you."

"Sir! How dare you! Mercy! What's that! Remove your arm at once, sir, and take me back into the room! Where is Oscar?"

"I—I—beg—a thousand—er—will Madame have the—the kindness to—er—return my monocle? It has fallen in—er—er—her bodice. I really must have it; I am so used to it."

"Leave me, sir, at once! Oh, Oscar, I am so glad you have come. I wish to go home immediately, and if you do not take me I shall be obliged to leave alone."

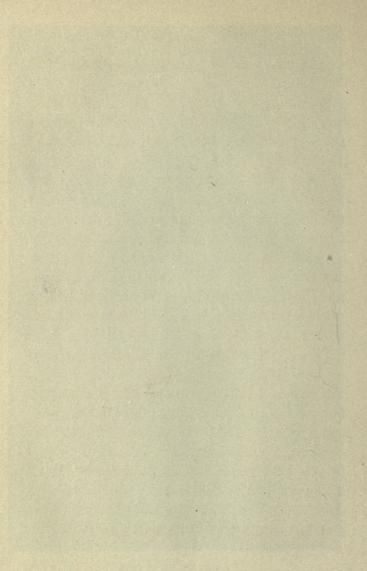
"Why, what has happened, dear?"

"Never mind what has happened. I am tired, and wish to go home. Will you take me, or do I go alone?"

"Why, Minna! The Grand Duke has just



"Leave me, sir, at once."



asked me to arrange the next dance with you."

"Well, I am sorry, Oscar. The Grand Duke will be obliged to seek some else for the dance. I shall not dance with him nor any one else to-night."

"Very well, Minna, if you insist upon it I will take you home; but you have not danced with me, and his Majesty has not yet arrived. You must be presented to him by all means."

"I have danced with you before, Oscar; so please, please take me away from this place. The Czar, I will meet some other time. Here comes Madame Karapot; tell her we are going home."

- "Why, what is the matter, child?"
- "I am going home, Madame."
- "Nonsense! The ball is only just beginning, and the Grand Duke desires the next dance with you. Why, you are the envy of all the ladies present!"
  - "My dear Madame, I am going home!"
- "Minna!" You will surely wait until you have danced with the Grand Duke! You must not disappoint him; and you must not

forget that you have not yet been presented to His Majesty."

"I am an American girl; and if I do not choose to dance with the Grand Duke or meet the Czar, I do not see wherein I am compelled to do so. And I say most emphatically that I refuse to dance with him; he is no more to me than any other man."

"My dear girl, you are in Russia and must do as the Russians do. So you will please act as befits a Russian court lady."

"Well, if I am a Russian because my future husband is one—why, if that is your law, I cannot change it. And if your Russian ladies come to a court ball to exhibit their bare bodies, and your Russian gentlemen are at liberty to do anything they please,—why, I do not like it, and I am going HOME!"

" Minna!"

"Madame!—Once more, Oscar, will you take me home? Or shall I be compelled to go alone?"

"Come with me, dear, we will go at once. Bow pleasantly as if nothing had happened.— Smile to the Grand Duke; we are passing him—

no, you had better act as though you felt faint and were obliged to go home.—There, that will do, we are past them all now.—Here is the carriage, dear, get in quickly—Shasinka, drive to the castle as rapidly as possible.—Now, dear, tell me what happened."

"Oh, Oscar! I am very, very sorry you ever took me to such a place. You knew I do not approve of such exhibitions. Beside, one of the noble gentlemen with whom I had been dancing took me, at my request, into the recess of a window in one of the anterooms."

"Well, that was all right. But what happened that vexed you so?"

"What happened! Why, he professed a fear that because the window was open I might take cold; so he put his arm around my shoulder and tried to force himself so closely to me that he dropped his monocle into my bodice. I should think that was enough for a gentleman to apologize and leave; but no, he had the impudence to ask me to return it.—Here is one of your society eyes that has been scorching my skin. I have felt, ever since it dropped there, as if all the fires of hell were

burning my soul. Never, never again will I undergo such humiliation."

"There! There! Don't cry, dear, you will never have to do it again. I agree with you that it is horrible, and fully sympathize with you; I do not blame you in the least."

"Oh, Oscar! How could you have introduced your future wife to such women! Why during the twenty-five minutes I spoke to the Grand Duchess, she told me enough to keep me from ever entering society again. Why, she pointed out every woman in the room, and told me who their lovers were. She called by name the mistress of every married man—they were all there,—and you and I were there, Oscar. Just think of it! You may do as you please; but I—I am done with it forever."

"It shall be as you wish, dear. By the way, who was the scoundrel that dropped his monocle in your bodice?"

"Why, the one I danced with last, you saw me with him. I felt I could strike him but I had to content myself with calling him the Grand Duke's valet."

"Valet is too good a name for him. I have

wondered what made him so popular with the Grand Duke."

"He has a title, has he not?"

"Oh, yes. He could not have been at the bail unless he was titled."

"Well, Oscar, I hope that your grand-parents did not earn their titles by such services."

"It's hard telling, Minna. But here we are at the castle. Now go to your apartments and quiet yourself. Your presentation has been too exciting; you are all unstrung—Goodnight, dear."

## CHAPTER VII.

#### THE GREAT RUSSIAN CRIME.

WHAT a dreadful affair that ball was last night! I shall never go to another court ball as long as I live. Never! The others were bad enough but the extreme décolleté of these court gowns is dreadful. It is shocking. What a fright that woman was! Why, she was fully fifty years old and her face was covered with black hairs. Her features were so coarse I thought at first she was a man. How dreadful for such a woman to appear in full evening dress! And her bodice was cut extremely low, too. As if it was not enough to display her face. Where were her eyes that she could not see how ridiculous she was! Where was her husband that he allowed her to appear in public in that fashion! It is dreadful.

I wonder where the signal is! Can it be that in the excitement they have forgotten me? They promised to signal to me from the other

side of the lake. Perhaps the first one didn't do the work. Mercy! This suspense is dreadful. Can anything have happened? Perhaps it isn't time yet. Yes it is. Oscar said he would leave the palace about eleven for a drive along the Ekaterinofsky Canal. It is now a quarter past; and no signal yet. Perhaps he was delayed. Still, fifteen minutes is hardly time for any one to get to the lake and set the signal for me. I must wait here until dinner time; and if there is no signal by then, I shall know our plans have miscarried.

Is that voices I hear? Or am I only nervous and imagine it? No, it is voices! Heavens! it is Madame Karapot; and some one is with her! How can I get away without their seeing me! If they should find me here they would think me guilty of listening when I've no such intentions. I shall have to stay here until they go away. They are just at the foot of the stairs,—the only means of getting out of this turret. What is that Madame Karapot is saying?—'Something of great importance' to tell Oscar? What can it be! Does she know anything, I wonder? Yes, I must stay here! I

might hear some information that will help our cause. That's Oscar talking.

"Now, mother, what is it that makes you appear so pleased and unhappy at the same time?"

"My son, you have been blinded by this woman whom you have picked up in America. I want you to listen to me; and if what I have to say does not open your eyes to the true character of this woman, I assure you, upon my word, I will never speak one detrimental word of her again."

"Well, mother, what is it? Speak, please."

"My son, your so modest American woman, who refuses to go to a ball in full-dress, and thinks our society ladies unfit to associate with, finds it very convenient, at eleven o'clock at night, when her betrothed is not at home, to meet her lover in the garden, kiss and embrace him, promenade around with him for an hour or so, and, when bidding him an affectionate adieu, hand him a purse of gold, and then return to us, an angel."

"Stop, mother! I will listen to no more, It is not true. I will not hear one word against

Minna. Such nonsensical talk! My Minna-A lover! Really this is too good to enjoy alone. I must have Minna join me. My Minna with a lover! Thank you, Madame, for the information. I regret that I can remain no longer. I do not care to hear any more."

"Stop, Oscar! This woman has certainly hypnotized you. You say I have not spoken the truth? Good! Then I must prove it to you. Will you be convinced when you see for yourself? She does not expect you to be home to-night, and the signal is in the window to that effect. Whenever she has a large vase filled with roses on the little table by the window, it is the signal to her lover that he may come and that you will not be at home. Why, you may ask her maid. She must tell the truth, for she sits but a few yards behind the hedge, waiting for her mistress until she is through with her lover. You see the maid is useful as a shield so that, in case the mistress meets any one while on her way home, she will not be questioned about being out alone. Your so virtuous future wife! Bah!"

<sup>&</sup>quot;I do not believe one word you have said, 261

Madame. If Minna receives anybody in the garden with caresses and kisses, it is all right, because she would do no wrong."

"Oscar! Oscar! I feel very sorry for you. My God! How can a mother see her only son's betrothed receiving her lover at night, on her future husband's premises! Shall I be silent about it? Would I be a true mother if I was? I, your mother, have humiliated myself, by sending out servants to spy upon this woman. Do you think a public scandal would be very pleasant for me? Do you think I would allow my honorable name to be scandalized in the drawing-rooms of the society ladies who are so jealous of my reputation? No! Not for anything in the world! The doors of the royal palace have been opened through me; and the title of 'Lord' was given to your father through me. You, my son, may receive any favor of the Czar that you wish. The high reputation of your mother has done it all. And now you have brought this beggar into my house. The illegitmate child of a Jewess!"

"She is no beggar; the Czar himself was

the one who sent me to search for her. He implored me to find her,—to bring her to him. The Czar is a great man and I do not think he would take such an interest in a beggar."

"What! You say it is the Czar who sent you to America? And you intend to marry the cast-off mistress of the Czar? Why, this is the most extraordinary thing I've ever heard! The mistress of the Czar under my roof! No, No! That is more than I will stand. If you are bound to marry this woman, Oscar, then take her and leave my house, never to return!"

"Very well, Madame; I will go to Minna at once."

"Go to Minna! Where is she? She is not in her apartments for I have looked for her there to demand an apology for her ridiculous behavior at the court last night. Neither is she in the gardens, for I have had them searched. She must be somewhere about, for no one has seen her go out."

"Never mind, Madame. I will find her and we will leave the castle in a few hours. I have just returned from the palace, and His Majesty has appointed three o'clock this afternoon for

a private audience. He commands me to present her at that time. I bid you good-morning."

There, now they are gone, I can slip back to my apartments without being seen.—Mercy! Madame Karapot was agitated.—And to think she should make it her business to denounce me to Oscar!—Noble fellow! He wouldn't believe it.—I knew he wouldn't.—Here he comes. He must have been looking all over for me.

"Ah! Here you are, dear. I knew I would find you in your apartments. Mother said you were not here. I thought she must be mistaken. You must excuse me, dear, for entering so unceremoniously, but I have had an unpleasant interview with my mother. You see, Minna dear, they have been spying on you. How can I tell you! Mother tried to tell me—but really, I am at a loss to know how to repeat such nonsensical talk. Minna, I understand you have a handsome young man visiting you at night when—"

"Stop, Oscar! I heard it all."

<sup>&</sup>quot;You heard it all? Why, where were you?"

"In the turret. You were talking in the corridor just at the foot of the stairs and I could not get out. Noble soul, you didn't believe it, did you?"

"Of course not. And because I did not believe it we are both ordered out of the house."

"Yes, I know, I heard, Oscar. But you do not even ask me if it is true."

"I would not be guilty of asking such a question. I know you. Come here you little cheat and give me back all those kisses you gave your sweetheart. I must have them all back."

"Oscar, suppose I were to tell you it is true, that I do meet some one in the arbor at eleven at night and kiss him and give him a purse full of gold? Would you believe it then? Yes, Oscar, it is true. The young man who comes to see me, my dear, is so noble! Oh, what a soul he has, Oscar! Men and women fall in love with him."

"Minna!—Forgive me, dear; I was stunned for a moment. You will tell me who it is, won't you?"

"Yes, I will tell you, my dear, but you must have patience a little longer."

"Then you are going to have a secret from your future husband?"

"Yes."

"I could have sworn that my Minna would have no secret from me."

"Do you remember, Oscar, when we became engaged, you gave me full permission to lead an absolutely independent life? And I have, my dear. But do not fear, I am still your Minna, just the same as when you first met me; and my lover who comes to the arbor at night is not dangerous."

"And shall I have the pleasure of meeting him?"

"That lies in the hands of God. Perhaps to-night, perhaps never."

"Why? What is the reason?"

"If my lover does not take a long journey, then you shall see him to-night. Meanwhile you must help me burn all this correspondence from him, which I was about to do as you entered."

"So mother's conversation frightened you,

did it? And you are going to destroy all the evidence against you?"

"Yes, indeed. This package of letters, so carefully concealed in this case, contains the most incriminating evidence against me; and here it goes.—See it burn! I prepared that fire especially for its destruction."

"Do you feel easier now, my dear? Will you sit down a moment and listen to me? I have something of importance to tell you. I, too, have a little secret. Five years ago, the Czar instructed me with a mission. He sent for me to come to his private chamber, and told me that a most devoted General of our country was the father of a young girl who, as an infant, was stolen from her mother's arms. 'We have traced her as far as New York,' he said, 'and her mother is a Jewess of a wealthy. family. Now I want you, my dear Oscar, to start for America at once. Take as much time as you wish, spare no expense, but find this girl for me, and thereby do me a great favor.' Now, my dear, I went to America; and you may believe me, I was true to the mission on which I was sent. When I met you in Chi-267

cago, I was in the deepest despair and had given up all hope of locating you; but when you insisted upon telling me the story of your life, it corresponded, word for word, so perfectly with the one the Czar had given me, that I was positive you were the one I was sent to find. His Majesty had given me a letter, addressed to you, with instructions not to deliver it, unless you resisted the proposal to come to Russia. I found you about to start on the search for your parents, and, there being no resistance. I withheld the letter according to instructions. But you resisted at the ball last night and would not wait for His Majesty; so I think it proper to deliver it now. You naughty girl! You would not wait to see him at the ball, and I know he felt hurt about it; but he has so arranged matters that a private interview will be held at the palace this afternoon. Only your father,—the General, with His Majesty, you, and myself, will be there. Here is the letter; and as my mother has ordered us to leave the castle, I consider it most advisable for you to read it at once. It may contain information of importance to

you; and beside, I am anxious to know which officer is so lucky as to be your father. I know every officer of the government; so do read it at once—I am all impatience. Come, why are you so excited? Why do you go to the window so often? You are hardly listening to me! Minna, come here and read your letter, it will inform you who your father is?"

"My father! Will that letter tell me who my father is? Give it to me, Oscar. How could you have kept it from me so long? If it tells me who my father is, it is the most welcome letter in the whole world. How can I forgive you for keeping it so long?—How—Oscar!—My God!—"

"What is it, Minna? What is the news? Why don't you speak?"

"Oscar!—Oscar!—I am lost!—It is dark; I cannot see!—I am choking, Oscar!—Air!—Air!—Help me!—Rescue me!—Oscar!—Oscar!!!—"

"Minna—Minna!—What is it?—What is the matter?—What is there in the letter that has affected you so?—Why, Minna, you are shivering—you are burning hot—you are dying!—

Minna!—Minna!—Speak to me!—Tell me what is the matter!"

"Oscar, my darling!—Pity me!—Have mercy!-Help me!-My God, is it possible that I who have suffered so many years and prayed to you, my Heavenly Father, to give me my parents-my father, my mother,-I wanted to know-have I asked more than any other human being? Even a dumb animal possesses parents !- It is horrible !- It is horrible !-Oh, Oscar, this is more than I can endure !-I am strangling !-Help me !-My heart is breaking!-Oh, Oscar, I have done it !-I loved him !-I worshiped him !-I searched and hunted for him; -and when I found him-Heaven help me!-I killed him! -Pity me, Oscar!-Pity me!-No!-No!-Don't pity me !- I do not deserve pity !- I have sinned !- I am punished !-"

"Minna!—What is it you have done?—Who has been killed?"

"Come!—Come to the window, Oscar!—See!—See that man over there!—There, on the other side of the lake!—He is signaling, Oscar! He is signaling to me that my lover is

in danger,—and HE is dead!—My God!—Is it possible?—Go away!—Oscar!—Don't touch me!—I have had a secret from you, Oscar!—A most horrible—terrible—secret!—Go away!—I can never look on your face again!—I am not fit to be touched by you again!—"

"You say you have a secret, and you are not fit to be touched by me? Is it possible that my mother is right, after all? She said you were the Czar's mistress;—and I am about to be married to you! You angel looking, sweet devil! Tell me all; or—I—"

"Oscar, darling, don't lose your reason.—If I am to die, it will not be by your hand, but by the hand of God.—Don't stain your hand in blood, as I have mine—in my father's!—HE is dead!—Oscar!—He is dead!—I am the murderer of my own father!—Listen, Oscar—I must tell you all!—Every moment is precious,—and I must fly from here!—The lover that came to see me on those nights when you were away,—the one whom I have embraced and kissed,—is a woman,—Oscar dear,—not a man!—A woman Nihilist who threw the fatal bomb

an hour ago that killed MY FATHER,—THE CZAR OF RUSSIA!—And I, dear Oscar,—was the leader of the plot!—I gave my money—and all the information I could get through you of the Czar's whereabouts!—And now I have killed him!—My father is dead!—Here is the letter, Oscar!—Read!—"

"My God!—This is terrible!—This letter must be burned too!—No, we must preserve it!—It may help you if trouble arises!—You must not cry now—we've no time to lose!—I must get you out of here immediately!"

"No!—I must go over there—where I am needed!—They have been signaling me!—They are in trouble!—I cannot desert them now!"

"You shall not go! My Minna belongs to me, and the mother belongs to her boy! You cannot and shall not go until I say so! I will arrange to send you immediately to a place of safety; and I faithfully promise you, on my word of honor, that I will do all I possibly can to assist your lover. If she is in any trouble, you could not help her; but I, through influential friends, might be able to do some-

thing. If you go near them now, you will undoubtedly be arrested and endanger me; and what will become of your boy? Try to be calm now, and I will do everything possible for them."

"Oscar!—Oh, Oscar!—I have killed my father!—I have killed my father!"

"Yes, poor child!—Only this morning I saw him alive when he arranged for the private interview this afternoon! It is sad! But we must not delay! We must think now of getting you away. They may trace the plot to you and come here to arrest you!—Come!—Be quick!—I hear some one coming!—Wait!—Let me see who it is!—Ah! don't worry, it is only mother! She is coming to tell me the news."

Madame Karapot rushed wildly into the room.

"Well, my son! Are you satisfied now? The soldiers have taken possession of my garden.—My house! They are tearing down the walls! They are ransacking everything! Think of it Oscar! Our stainless name is to be dragged down by this woman! Oh, Oscar,

Oscar! What a degradation! What a disgrace! My God! It is an unbearable humiliation for us! Searching my house for treasonable papers! For Nihilistic literature! Oh, Oscar, think of the terrible shame! We shall all go to Siberia! They will send us all there! Why are you standing there like an image and gazing at her sweet face? Look at that picture! Would any one believe that Satan has housed himself in that innocent, pure-looking, saintly devil?"

"Mother, you are surely mad!"

"Ah! my son, now I am mad, am I? And this morning you said I was a liar!—See, here are the police come to arrest her!—Officers do your duty! Drag her away from here!—Place her in the darkest of dark cells!—Put heavy chains on her!—Chain her down—she is dangerous!"

"Officer, stand back a moment!—Mother pity me, and say no more. Can you, a woman, speak so bitterly against this poor helpless child? You know only too well what a fate confronts her. My God! My Minna! My precicus love! You—in—prison!——For God's

### The Great Russian Crime.

sake, officer, allow me at least to bid her good-bye!"

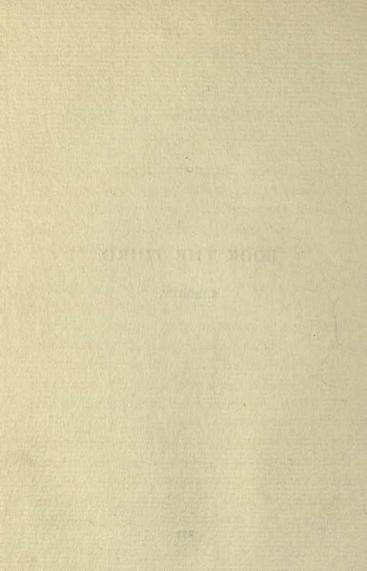
"No one is allowed to speak to Madame. My orders are to place her under immediate arrest and make a thorough search of the castle. We have done that, Madame Karapot, and I am pleased to inform you that no incriminating evidence has been found against you."

"Oh, Minna! Minna! Be brave, dear! Everything will be done for you!—O God!—They are taking her away!"

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# BOOK THE THIRD.

LIBERTY.



### CHAPTER I.

#### THE PENALTY.

I SHALL never forget the day, when, after six months in prison, Oscar came to see me in my cell and announced that we would all start for Siberia that day. I was not sorry at leaving that pest-hole where it was always dark and damp, with no ray of light or sunshine—never day always night. The horror of that place is with me still. The very chains that bound me rang out the crime at every move—at every stir. The very air seemed full of the cry, "She killed her father! She killed her father!" Yet I could not see why they put chains on me, for no one could ever have got out of that Satan's chamber.

Oh, the remorse of it all! I asked myself over and over again, "Was it my fault?" and the answer invariably came, "Yes, it was; for no person on earth should ever go into a conspiracy to take another's life," and I saw how

wrong it was in me to have lent assistance to such a crime. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," Moses taught, and I believed it; but when the horror of my crime was before me, I saw it in a different light. "Too late to repent or regret!" I cried, "Let the punishment come! What is this prison or Siberia compared to the soul-suffering of one who is conscious of having committed a crime? They might take me back to the castle to live again in silks and laces; it would still be only a tomb."

My anguish was increased by the thought of all I had made poor Oscar suffer. I felt that I would willingly live five hundred years and live them all in that prison, could I take his burden upon myself. I had only one consolation, that I did what I thought was right; yet now that it was over, I was ready to pay any price to recall the deed—to bend my energies to prevent its accomplishment rather than assist in it. Still, I felt it was only right that I should be tried with my comrades. "No favor for one, let all suffer alike," I thought; and so, when Oscar begged me to accept a

private trial I would not consent, for I knew that the only hope of my comrades lay in being tried with me. Oscar came often to tell me of his efforts to secure my freedom, but I begged him to leave me to my fate.

"It was a great mistake," I sobbed, "and I must pay the penalty."

"Never mind, dear," he said soothingly, "you did wrong to give yourself wholly to the influence of those people. A great crime has been committed that has robbed Russia of a kind and noble ruler; but I blame myself. I was asleep when I should have been awake. I heard rumors of a plot to assassinate His Majesty, but there had been five unsuccessful attempts upon his life, and I had come to believe that nothing could happen to him. I should have listened to them and done something to prevent the awful catastrophe."

"What could you have done, Oscar?" I asked.

"I don't know, dear. The Nihilists had often invited me to join them, but I put them off. Had I done so, I would have been on hand to show them how great a man His

Majesty was and what great things he was planning for Russia. If they had given him time, they would no doubt have lived to see all the reforms they want,—and more, too. If I had only known, Minna!" he said dejectedly.

"You must not be too severe on yourself, Oscar," I said. "You had nothing whatever to do with the plot."

"True," he replied; "but see what I could have prevented if I had been concerned in it. Now, they have killed a great and good man; and thereby Russia will be thrown back fully a quarter of a century. Why, Minna, dear, the very morning of his assassination he left on his writing-table an unsigned constitution for his country; and I fear it will be a long time before another ruler will come who will be ready to grant that concession. He loved his people, Minna; and by that one act of emancipating the serfs he showed his greatness. I am afraid it will be many generations before Russia will see his like again."

Leaving no stone unturned, appealing from one person to another, Oscar tried to find help

for me, but his efforts were without avail. His dearest friends turned away as if he were infected with some deadly plague; they even feared to converse with him, for his arrest was momentarily expected, and they did not wish to become involved in any difficulty. Undoubtedly he would have been arrested the same day as I but for the powerful influence of his mother. Sick at heart, and in desperation, he pleaded on his knees that she should exert her influence for my release; but she faithfully promised to see that I was kept where I was. Receiving nothing but reproaches, Oscar left the house in despair and appealed again to his friends: but both they and his attorney advised that he allow me to be sent to Siberia. as it would be more expedient to have me brought back and then tried alone. So, after six months of suffering, Oscar had come to bid me good-bye, for I was about to leave for the mines.

"My darling," he said, "I cannot accompany you, for I must remain here to prepare for your early return and a new trial, which must be secured not only for your sake, but for your

child's. You have done your duty in being tried with your comrades, now you must allow me to arrange matters for you. I will tell you what I have found out, and what I have arranged so far. You will travel with eleven others, all charged with the same conspiracy. When you reach headquarters in Siberia, you will all be separated and sent to different mines, as the law there requires that but two prisoners shall be chained together. I feared there might be assigned you, as a companion, some common, low criminal; but I have been fortunate enough to secure for you a young political prisoner, who was sentenced a year ago on the charge of being a Nihilist. He is the cousin of a friend of mine, a merchant in Moscow, where I met this young man several years ago. He was once a Talmud student, but now he is highly accomplished and understands many languages. He is handsome, refined, intelligent, and will be happy to be of service to me, for I secured permission for him to study in Moscow. You know that no Jew is permitted to live there unless he belongs to the Perva Gilda.

"Our trusty servant, Karl, will accompany you on the march and will do everything possible for your comfort. He has letters to the officials, and plenty of money, which he will place in the bank in the nearest town. The bank-book will be given to the warden; so you will be a welcome prisoner. I wish to have him see that you are well supplied with money, for I have learned that he is a person who will show you special attention and allow you many privileges,—when he sees there is money for him. You owe it to me to be free and liberal with the money and procure everything that can be obtained."

"My dear Oscar," I said, "it is useless for me to try to thank you. You are right that I owe it to you and Dady to accept all your efforts. I will do as you say; but don't risk too much, for my sake, it would only grieve me."

"Very well, dear;" he promised. "Now, I cannot be on the bridge to bid you good-bye, for I must pretend in public to condemn your act. If I were to show the least sympathy, even though you were my wife, I would

never be able to approach those friends who have promised to assist me in bringing you back. It will be but a short time, dear, before we are together again; so be of good cheer and remember always that you leave, here at home, at least one who is working for you and will soon have you free. Then, Minna, we will be united and go far away, where we can begin anew and forget the past. Good-bye, dear, good-bye."

He left me and the warden soon came to lead me out into the yard where the eleven prisoners were being prepared for the march to Siberia.

The street from the high-road to the jail was lined with people, all anxious so see the eleven Nihilists condemned to serve twenty years in the mines. The gendarmes had the greatest difficulty in holding back the crowd so as to keep the road clear, and succeeded only by threatening to send the unruly ones along to Siberia.

The noise was deafening; drunken peasants expressed their ignorance, and even titled officers contemptuously proclaimed, in bois-

terous voices, the fate that awaited the unfortunates. The dearest friends of the prisoners. whose hearts were breaking, looked into one another's faces with despair, yet chatted and laughed loudly; for, surrounded as they were by spies and police, they dared not admit they were friends of the prisoners. As soon as the six soldiers appeared, the crowd became silent. Not a murmur arose, as they mechanically raised their hats. Even the gendarmes stood motionless; for the uproar of the crowd had ceased and their services were not required. Black clouds overspread the sky, the air became oppressive and rain fell, as if the heavens were weeping in sympathy with our fate. The signal was given; and, as the dead march started, you could hear the very stones echo in despair at every step.

These six were followed by a detail of four more soldiers guarding a tall, slim, pale young man, whose hands were tied behind him. He was a student and the son of refined parents, who had counted the days, one by one, until he should complete his university course and establish a name for himself. But now he is

doomed to serve twenty years in Siberia, because he had dared use his brains—and think.

A second detail of four more soldiers guards a starved-looking child. Yes, I may call him a child, for he seemed no more than fifteen years old, though his mother, a poor widow, said he was twenty one. He turned his head to the right and then to the left, as if seeking someone to come to his rescue; and his bloodless lips seemed about to part and cry: "Oh, mamma, mamma, I am afraid. Come and take me to your breast." His hands, too, were tied behind him; and trembling with fear, he marched on. His offense? He joined the Nihilists; and in so doing was guilty of a great crime, to be expiated by twenty years of exile.

This detail was followed by a third one of four soldiers who guarded a handsome man of about forty. Here, nature had moulded a perfect creation and provided it with external beauty, as well as a heart and brain; the greatness of his soul shone through his large soft gray eyes. He was a professor in one of the high medical colleges of St. Petersburg, and possessed of the most profound knowledge.

He was the father of four beautiful children, and his handsome young wife idolized him. The personification of benevolence, the picture of despair, he, too, was sentenced to twenty years in Siberia, because he had upheld his students who were Nihilists.

The fourth detail guarded a young Jew, whose handsome face was pale, his cheeks sunken, his colorless lips cracked and dry. He was defiant; and the expression on his face seemed to say, "Well, what else was to be expected in Russia?" As he came in sight a cry rose from the throng, "Oh, Itzie, my Itzie!" He nodded his acknowledgment and received a blow on the head from one of the soldiers; yet he only smiled and said, "Good-bye, good-bye, mother, dear." Every woman in the vast throng was weeping, and some of the men were trying to force back the tears, while others openly wiped theirs away with their handkerchiefs. Even the drunken peasants sobered up sufficiently to say, "Poor mother! Poor Jewess !"

A fifth detail of four soldiers appeared, guarding an old man of seventy, bent and gray;

a well-known and highly respected physician. He turned his head constantly as though looking for someone, and before anyone could realize what had occurred, a young girl sprang forward, threw her arms about his neck, and sobbed as if her heart would break, "Father, oh father! Do not leave me behind!" The chief of police rushed at her, and with the help of the gendarmes, brutally tore her away. Poor old man! He looked as if his soul had been parted from his body; as if he were bereft of all reason. He stood still and would not move on. The soldier gave him a push. "Walk on, swine," he shouted and dealt him a crushing blow under the chin. The blood streamed from his mouth, but he could not wipe it away, for his hands were tied behind him. He, too, was on his way to serve twenty years because he was a Nihilist and dared think.

This detail was followed by another of sixteen soldiers, who guarded a wagon containing four young men. They were consumptives and so weak from the dread disease, they were unable to walk. They were dangerous stu-

dents who had dared use their brains, and therefore had to be guarded by soldiers with loaded rifles, for they were on their way to Siberia to serve a twenty years' sentence.

The last detail guarded two women. One had short black hair, sparkling eyes, and a cheerful, almost gay, expression. The other one was—myself. We were both bareheaded, and held up our heads and looked every one in the face, as if we wished to bid each a farewell. We, too, had been sentenced to Siberia for twenty years.

As we reached the high-road, a wagon, which Oscar had provided, was waiting to convey me to Siberia. Oscar himself was there in disguise; and though I did not see him, I felt his presence. We resumed our journey, and a week passed, with nothing to relieve the dull monotony. Every one was silent, and each kept his sorrows to himself; for all had left dear ones behind. During the second week the old physician became ill, and so weak he could no longer walk. I procured a vehicle at one of the stations, but we had to leave it with the officer of the next post, who

returned it to the first station. Whenever we were unable to secure a conveyance, I walked and gave the old man my wagon; but I was not obliged to walk very long, for at the end of the second week, he died. My trustworthy servant, Karl, whom Oscar had had the foresight to provide, generously shared his horse by turns with the professor and the child convict and insisted upon walking most of the time.

The melancholy journey continued without further incident, except that we buried two of the poor consumptive students. If it happened that, during one of our periodical halts at the posts, the soldiers were not soaked in vodka, their memories became wonderfully sharp; and by a liberal use of the knout, they quickly reminded of his negligence any poor wretch who, during the march, being too tired to keep in step, had lagged behind. But alas! What could we do, but stand and look help-lessly on!

Though eleven of us left St. Petersburg, only eight arrived at Siberia. We were separated at once and the warden showed me to a

specially prepared room, with a stone floor and cold, damp, dreary walls, down which the water was dripping. It was pitch black; and when the door of the dark corridor was opened, the foul air from the other cells was wafted into mine. But it was appreciated,—for it was the best to be had. There was no chair, no bench, nor table; only a sack of straw which served as a bed.

In this place I prepared to serve my sentence, knowing not how long it would be, thinking only of the one great certainty—that I had killed my father and the punishment suited the crime.

### CHAPTER II.

### SIBERIA.

KARL, who had arrived two days before, came in sobbing and kissed my hand.

"Oh, Madame, Madame! It is the best I could do," he said. "They allowed me to scrub the room and put new straw in the sack, but that was all. If you could see the other cells, you would realize the great favor that has been granted you; yours is a queen's room compared to the others. They are filthy, and full of vermin and disease. The sacks have lain on the floors for years; many have died on them and they have never been changed. See, mistress," he went on, "up here near the top of the wall is a small grating, which opens into the next cell; and when you talk here you can be plainly heard in there. That cell is occupied by the young Nihilist, Josef, of whom the Count spoke; he will be your working com-

panion. These are the only two cells so connected in the prison; so I managed to clean his as well as yours, and he has just moved in. You cannot imagine how he appreciated the change. He was delighted with the letter the Count sent him and assures me that he will protect you with his life."

The warden soon appeared and said it was time for Karl to leave. He gave me permission to remain out of doors for one hour in the evening under heavy guard. When they had departed I threw myself on the sack of straw and, being utterly exhausted, fell asleep. I did not waken until I heard the peal of a great gong and the rattle of a large key in the lock of my door. A guard placed a cup of water and some dry bread in the cell. I could see by the lantern what he had left, but when he was gone, all was darkness again. A short time after, I heard a whistle blow, and the door was again opened. A guard unlocked the chain that secured me by the ankle to the wall, and giving me a violent push, led me into a large room where there were several women convicts. Here, he informed us, we might

wash ourselves in the dirty water, if we chose to do so, and, one after another, we washed, without the water being changed. Several women spoke to me, as if willing to become friends; but I sought only the dark-eyed young girl who had been my companion in the march. I looked and looked, but alas! it was in vain.

In about fifteen minutes we were led out, and I was chained to a large wheel-barrow, the others being chained two by two. Some of the women were bound to other women, the rest were chained to men. The warden approached leading a young man; and, as he drew near, I pulled my small shawl over my head and down on my face, for I hardly knew whether I was dreaming or awake. He was brought over to a cart and chained to it. Another chain, which secured his ankle, was looped to a band around mine, and two soldiers, who were waiting at the gate, marched us off. When we had gone about half the distance, my companion turned to one of them and said, "I will give you each a ruble to-night and will give it often, if you will permit me to

help this lady." The soldier turned to his companion for a moment and then replied, "Chorusho" (good).

In half an hour, pulling our cart and dragging our heavy chains, we reached the mines. "Is it possible," I wondered, "that Oscar, should have been the innocent instrument by which I was chained to this man? Why is he here? What a strange world!"

How long I mused thus, I did not know, until I was startled by my companion touching me.

"Madame," he said, "will you please lay your hands on the cart and pretend to be pulling it? I will do the real pulling, for I can do it easily; I am strong, and it is not hard for me. Try not to be downcast and melancholy; I have addressed you several times, but apparently you did not hear me. You are a Nihilist, Madame, and a woman of your standing, so clever and bright, must make the best of the situation. You have twenty years to serve, and that is a long time in such a place. I have been here a whole year, and know what it means; but I am satisfied that every stone I

lift in this cart is a burden taken from our suffering Russia. Nothing is lost to nature; our humiliation and hard labor are all recorded. No good cause can be gained without some sacrifice; so I have filled our carts with as much as I could get in. My work is light; I could dance with these heavy chains, without becoming fatigued. Come, come! Let us waste no time. Let us empty our loads and refill them."

My eyes opened wide in astonishment as I listened to him. "Is it possible," I wondered "that he can really be so clever?" I remembered that I had never heard him talk, so it was possible he had always been brilliant.

"You must not fill my cart again;" I said. "I must do my own share."

I laid my hand on the cart and pulled as hard I could; but it was necessary for him to help, or I would never have got it to the dump. He emptied both our carts; and as we returned, I noticed that he always moved the foot attached to my chain with a quick, forward jerk, so that the chain, which was quite long, always shot ahead of me. I was under

the impression that one of his feet was hurt, and I could not comprehend how he could endure the strain of standing all day; so I insisted on helping him fill the next cart.

I took his advice and tried to forget my condition, and even exchanged a few words with him. "Money is a wonderful power," he said. "Without it we would never have been able to speak a word to each other; the two rubles have done it all!"

After we had filled two carts and emptied them again, the soldiers gave us permission to be seated and partake of our lunch, which consisted of the usual diet,—bread and water.

The rest of the day we said very little, and worked on in silence. In the evening we were taken to our cells again, where we found a very small dim light, a cup of water and some dry bread. Presently the warden came and informed me that he had received a visit from some officials of a near-by city, by whose permission I was to have better food, if I wished to pay for it; and, if I desired, I might have a book—that is, if I paid for it.

Josef overheard our talk, and calling to the

warden, asked if he might speak. Permission being granted, he asked if he would have the kindness to give the books to him to read, instead of to me. "The light is so poor," he said, "it would hurt her eyes. I can read to her, for my eyes are strong." Though I felt I could not permit him to ruin his eyes for me, I comprehended that he also was lonesome, and that it would be better for him to have the books so we could both enjoy them. The warden asked me if I desired to have him read, and I assented.

Josef asked so many questious we did very little reading that evening. He was a Nihilist and had been a year away from civilization; so, naturally, he was anxious to know what had occurred during that time. He thanked me for all the information I gave him, and finally, we bade each other good-night, and I was soon asleep.

Five months soon passed. One morning, while I was waiting for the soldiers to chain Josef to my cart, I noticed that he walked unusually straight; but as soon as he was linked to me, he once more became lame.

"Josef," I said, "tell me; are these chains so heavy that they affect your foot? I have noticed that when you have them on, you walk with a peculiar jerk, yet you are straight at other times. Do they hurt your foot?"

The tears sprang to his eyes; and though he tried to hold them back, they coursed down his cheeks as he replied, "Yes, they are heavy." Then I realized for the first time that he had purposely made the chains shoot ahead, so that I would not have to drag them.

"Oh, Josef!" I cried, "You must not do that. Your own chain is heavy enough. Let me drag mine."

"You have twenty years before you, my dear Madame," he replied, "and may God help you. Have you ever looked over there?" he asked. I looked in the direction in which he was pointing and saw in the distance something I could not discern very well; so I asked what they were.

"They are skeletons," he replied; "but life is not yet gone. They are unfortunates who have become maniacs; poor convicts who

have served many years in the mines and, crushed by such a life, have lost all reason. They have no friends or relatives to assist them so they are forced to live on bread and water. Thank God, their time will soon expire!"

"Can't I do something for them?" I inquired. "I might have the warden serve them at least one good meal a day. I have plenty of money and would gladly assist them."

"No, Madame," he replied, "I would advise you not to. It would only compel them to struggle longer. The sooner they are relieved of their wretchedness, the better it will be for them." And I knew he was right.

One evening, after we had retired to our cells, I called through the grating to Josef and told him he had better go to sleep instead of reading, for I noticed he had not been feeling very well. He was quiet for a while; then suddenly he called:

"Are you asleep, Madame?"

"No," I replied "not yet."

"I was just thinking," he continued, "how much easier my burden is to bear than yours.

As bitter as my cup is, it contains one consolation;—there is no one to worry about me. I have not left behind a single person who cares a jot where I am. There are no tears for me, no aching hearts; I am all alone. I am all alone, and that helps me to bear my burden."

"Why, Josef," I exclaimed, "that is very surprising! Have you not left a sweetheart behind?"

"Yes, I have left a sweetheart behind; one whom I loved dearly. She hated me, though she scarcely knew me. I have been married, —that is to say, I was forced into a marriage when I was a young man and did not understand the world. I had no idea what marriage meant, nor what its duties were. I was a lazy, worthless fellow-never had any bringing up -just grew like a wild weed; and she, poor girl, was dragged into the marriage, I presume, as well as myself. I never dared look at her with open eyes until three hours after our wedding, when, though half asleep, I saw she was a pretty girl, with a very innocent and childish face. God bless her, wherever she

may be! She hated me and ran away. I have traveled considerably, I have met many women and have had many opportunities to re-marry; but my only longing and prayer has been to see her again. I have always treasured the hope that, if we ever met again, she might learn to love me; but of course, since coming here, I have given up all hope of ever seeing her again. Sometimes, I imagine that I will live through it all and still have a chance to meet her; but of course it is only an idle dream, the result of constant thinking of her. Whenever I see a strange woman, I almost run, and imagine it might be she. I know it is foolish; but what can we do? We are human and will be afflicted with such weakness, in spite of all our heroism. Love is indeed painful,—when it is hopeless. And now, as I work with you, side by side, I try very often to console myself and force my imagination to believe I am working with her. You will pardon me, Madame, won't you, that I dare draw these imaginary pictures? It cools my burning brain and relieves my aching heart. I know you are so noble and will

permit me to lose myself in these idle dreams. Forgive me, Madame, I am afraid I am delirious and have spoken too much; but, Madame, you resemble her wonderfully."

"Go on, Josef. It is very strange that I should so strongly resemble your wife."

"Yes, Madame. When I first met you, a thrill went through me, and I felt that I must run over to you and cry, 'Oh, Minna, Minna! Is it really you?' Excuse me, Madame, for the thought, since I could only see your chin, your shawl covering the rest of your face. For a moment, I forgot what suffering my wife would have had to experience to be here; still, I was glad she was with me."

"Tell me, Josef," I asked, "which would you choose;—to have her here with you, suffering your fate, or to have her wherever she may be, happy and contented?"

"Why, of course, Madame, there is no question about that. If my desire for her were to increase tenfold, I could never wish her here to share this torture. But I will admit there have been desperate moments for me in the past year, when I forgot every consideration in

my longing and prayed most earnestly that she might be at my side."

"Good-night, Josef," I called. "You had better go to sleep. Does your head feel better?"

"I have a very severe headache," he replied, "and I seem to be burning up; I fear I have a fever."

"Perhaps it will be better to have a doctor, Josef. Is there any way to summon one?"

"No, Madame. That is out of the question. I must wait until morning for any relief. It cannot amount to much. Good-night."

I could not sleep. Josef's talk had cut my heart like a knife. It made me feel homesick and gave me so much to think of. "So, poor Josef, you really loved your wife," I thought, "and have not forgotten her! What an unselfish, manly love! My poor Oscar was right when he said that Josef was a man. Every act shows his admirable worth. But, his wife, does she know of it? In all probability she is engaged to some one else."

Poor, suffering Josef! I was sorry I could not help him. The only consolation I could

give was to tell him that I also loved dearly and was suffering. Tired as I was from my day's work, I could not sleep and tossed all night. I could hear Josef moaning in his feverish, restless sleep, "Minna, my Minna, I love you." In the morning I heard him try to raise himself; but each time he fell back from weakness, the chains reporting all his movements.

"Josef, how do you feel?" I called. "Is your head any better?"

"No, Madame, it is no better."

"I want you to remain in bed all day today," I said. "I will speak to the warden. I am sure he will be willing to make five rubles. You just rest. You have been delirious all night."

"No, Madame, I cannot. I must go with you to the mines. The air will do me good—the cart is so heavy—oh, those chains!"

"No, Josef. I cannot allow you to go to the mines. You must stay in to-day and rest. Just fancy that Minna is here with you in the mines, that she is giving you a day's rest, and that she is taking your share of the work. My

name is Minna, too, so I give you permission to think of whatever you please. Stay in, Josef, rest and dream. Dream on, Josef, if it will make you any the happier. I do not mind. You have been kind to me, you have dragged my chain and filled my cart; so please allow me to be of some service to you in return. I will speak to the warden and see that he permits you to remain in all day."

In a few minutes the jailer arrived, unlocked the chains from the wall and led me to my cart. While he was chaining me to it, I saw them leading Josef out. He looked so very pale and weary that I asked the soldier to call the warden. When he came, I said to him. "Warden, Josef is very sick this morning and has been delirious all night. He has been very kind to me, so I wish to ask a favor of you for his comfort. Hire a man to take his place and do his work for to-day, and I will pay five rubles. I beg you to please grant my request, and allow Josef to rest to-day in his cell; he will probably be better to-morrow. If it is possible to procure a doctor, do so immediately; if you can manage a little broth, get it.

Spare no money, but draw on me for all you need; only please get some help and relief for him without delay. I can do his share of the work, easily. I can work for two; I am strong. You don't know how strong I am."

"Good!" replied the warden; and giving a wink to the guard, Josef was led back to his cell. Then I started to the mines; and when I arrived I took my pick and struck at the rocks, and tried to loosen the ore. I struck again and again without any result; it would not give in to me as readily as it did to Josef. "Come! Come!" I cried, "Josef is not here to-day, and you really must give in to me.-He is sick in bed.-He is very ill, and I must do his share." One more stroke, and then another—"Oh—please—please come," I cried. "Don't you know I must do double work to-day?—I cannot stay here so long. For every stroke I must have a stone, that I may fill my cart.—I must be faithful and true-Josef says that every stone we take away is a block removed from the barricaded road where our sisters and brothers are trying to break through. So please come!

Oh, please come!—I must fill the load and drag my chain.—Josef says that nothing is lost to nature; every action, every thought is recorded.—Please come!"

Finally I succeeded in filling three carts. When the fourth was full I looked over toward the living grave-yard, where the skeletons were dancing and laughing at me. "Why are you so happy?" I shouted. "Is it because you think Josef has deserted me? Or because my Oscar has not written to me for a year?—He will write.—He will write if he is not dead.—And Josef will come if he gets well, and I will dig and dig and fill my carts.—Josef said I must be faithful, for nothing is lost to nature!"

So I fulfilled my double day's work. When I was brought back to my cell, Josef greeted me and thanked me for giving him that day's rest, which had done him so much good. In a few minutes he was again talking of his love and his wife. He had so much to tell me about himself, that I did not interrupt, but allowed him to pour out his oppressed heart. I listened to him for hours; until at last I was

### Siberia.

obliged to tell him to go to sleep, for I was tired, and, no doubt, he was, too. The next morning he accompanied me to the mines, though he could scarcely stand on his feet.

# CHAPTER III.

#### THE PARDON.

For another month Josef and I worked side by side, with no word from my only hope in the living world. I had received only one message from Oscar during the entire time, and that was shortly after my arrival in Siberia.

"Josef," I said one day, "do you think that Count Karapot is still alive? Do you think it possible that he would desert me like this?"

"Karl is on the road now," he replied, "endeavoring to find out everything. I fear that some one is intercepting your mail."

He had hardly answered my question when a soldier came to take me before the warden, to receive the news that an officer had arrived with my pardon. He told me that the very same day that Oscar had secured it and had started out to bring it to me, he had been killed in a duel. When I heard this I was soon hav-

### The Pardon.

ing a conversation with Oscar. I laughed, I sang and danced; I tried to get him to go to the mines with me, and help me fill my cart. "Come, darling, come! You are such a noble soul! Come and work for the good cause!" I cried.

I did not know what happened after that. When I came to myself I was lying in a bed in a comfortable room, with Josef stroking my face, and Oscar sitting by the other side of the bed, covering my hands with kisses and crying, "Minna, my darling, my darling!"

"Oh, Josef!" I cried. "Am I dreaming? Where are our dark cells? Why are you in civilian clothes? Oh, it is a dream!" I wanted to dream longer, and closed my eyes, but Oscar embraced me and kissed me again and again. "Open your eyes, Minna," he said tenderly, "it is not a dream. I am alive and well. It was a false report that I was killed, but I was very ill. Let us not think of the past, dear, for we must rest and then go on. You are free, and God has given you to me. But let us not say much now; I will wait till you are stronger."

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I fell back on the pillow, overcome, and tried to recall my thoughts. Fortunately I was able to cry, or I should have gone mad; for I realized, as I looked up at Oscar, that I was to be his wife now. "Where is my child?" I asked. "Do you know where he is?"

"Yes, dear. He is in Chicago with your friends. So do not worry. You must try to get well, for he wants his mother."

"How long have I been ill, Josef?"

" Five months," he replied.

"But tell me, Josef," I asked, "how do you happen to be free?"

"My dear Madame," he replied, "my time expired four months before your pardon arrived, but I pleaded with the warden to allow me to continue the work by your side in the mines. I begged him not to tell you I was free, for I could not think of leaving you alone. I suspected that something was wrong when the Count did not write for so long a time; but that is all passed, dear Madame."

Josef excused himself and left the room. When he had gone Oscar turned to me and said, "My dear, do you think you are strong

## The Pardon.

enough to listen to something of great importance?"

"Yes," I sobbed, for I was very weak. "What is it? Tell me all."

"But you must not cry, my dear, since it is something that may please you very much. Do you remember the time when you told me that you liked me better than any man you had ever known, but when you thought of marrying me, you had a feeling of repulsion which you could not repress?"

"Yes, Oscar. I remember it clearly. Go

on please."

"Very well," he continued, "I now confess that I, too, had the same feeling, whenever I thought of marriage, and always had an uncontrollable horror of the ceremony. Still, no woman has ever been so dear to me as you."

"Oh, Oscar! How strange!"

"Now—be prepared—dear—," he continued. "Be strong."

"What is it, Oscar? What has happened? Why are you so excited?"

He leaned over and took me in his arms.

"Minna, dear," he exclaimed, "embrace

me, for I AM YOUR BROTHER! Yes, your brother by the same father and I did not know it! Our father was a great man, dear, and your mother is noble; but mine—alas!—well, she is my mother."

"Oscar! Oscar! How terrible! How terrible! How strange it is that both of us should have felt repulsion at the thought of marriage, and yet love each other so well!"

"Yes, it is strange; but now your heart is free, and at the same time you belong to me. You love Josef, marry him; for I love you as a brother should. What a blessing that you have been so noble in your conduct! That you have lived up to your religion; for otherwise we would have been punished by God. While our father's loss is a great one, he has died, my dear, to save us from this horrible sin of a sister marrying a brother. It was God's will that I found it out the day I was bringing the pardon from the present Czar—our brother—but he shall never know it."

"Tell me, Oscar, tell me how you discovered it."

"The duel, which the warden referred to, was

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forced upon me. It seems that my own mother was the cause of it and planned it so that I might be injured in order to prevent me from coming to see you. She did not think it would end like this—but she had been punished.

"I was sitting in a café one evening, bidding my friends good-bye, for I was about to come to you. Presently an officer came in and hurled the reproach at me that I should be shameless enough to go to Siberia to bring back the woman who had killed my father. That was the first time I had ever heard the Czar referred to as my father, and I could not understand it. I called for an explanation at once, and several friends stepped in to prevent me from saying more; but the consequence was, that he challenged me, and a duel was arranged. I wrote you, but my letters never reached you; for I am sure that my mother took good care they were never sent. Instead, she sent word that I was dead. So, my dear sister, get strong now and be happy. You may marry Josef, for you love him, I know; yet I know, too, you would have married me, though you loved him."

"Oh, Oscar, Oscar! How glad I am to know you are my brother! Believe me, I shall forget the past in the happiness of having such a brother as you. Come, let me have your dear face and hands, that I may kiss them. Oh! You are my brother! Will you forgive me, that I should have been the cause of the death of your father? I cannot realize it! My brother, my brother! Oh, I cannot tell you how happy I am to know that I have a relative in the world!"

"I do forgive you, Minna dear, for I am your brother, and you are my sister; and I am going to see that she does all I tell her. Now you take Josef and go to America at once, for I have a little nephew who would like very much to see you. I shall continue the search for your mother; and I promise you, Minna, that I will bring her to you. So get strong."

"Believe me, my dear brother; if I could start at once, I would recover my strength more quickly, knowing that I was on my way to America."

"You shall go at once, dear, and I shall accompany you to the frontier. I have written

### The Pardon.

to Dr. Leiter, and he will be prepared to receive you. Now you rest while I go to look for Josef and tell him our plans. I shall be back in a few moments."

He closed the door and left me to myself. "What a strange world," I thought. I come to Russia to find my mother and end by discovering a brother. I enter into a plot to serve the people and succeed in killing my father. I suffer the penalty of my crime and find myself chained in Siberia to Josef, the Yeshiva Bocher whom I was forced to marry so long ago. I hated him and ran away from him; but I had to come to Siberia to learn what a noble man he is after all. So good, so self-sacrificing! And now, everything has cleared away, and I am free to make reparation for all he has suffered; to be to him what a wife should. He loves me and I have learned to love him; I shall try to make him happy. Truly, Fate has treated me better than I deserve."

I lay in my bed thinking of a thousand things and listening for Oscar to return with Josef. I remembered how startled I was when

I recognized him that first day in Siberia, when they brought him out and chained us together to the cart. I wondered how it was that he had not recognized me, until I suddenly remembered that my face was covered, according to custom, during the wedding ceremony, and, as I left in the night, he had never seen me sufficiently to recognize me. I thought of his goodness to me all those months in the mines, and I longed to take him to my Dady—our Dady—and be happy once more in my own little home.

An hour flew by, and Oscar came in to announce that Josef was nowhere to be found. My heart sank. Was it possible anything could have happened to him? No, that could hardly be.

"Have you looked everywhere, Oscar?"

"Yes," he replied, "I have looked everywhere; and just as I was returning here a gendarme handed me this note.—

<sup>&</sup>quot; COUNT KARAPOT.

<sup>&#</sup>x27;DEAR SIR :-

<sup>&#</sup>x27;I hope I have done my duty. I assure you, my dear sir, that I have tried to protect Madame and make her burdens as light as possible. I thank our God that I am permitted to

#### The Pardon.

see her safe in your hands, and I appreciate the confidence you have shown in trusting Madame to my care. I am satisfied my services are no longer required; so I leave, and beg you to thank Madame for her kindness to me.

JOSEF.'"

"My God! My God! Thou hast forsaken me!" I cried. "Oh, could I at least have made one soul happy! Surely, my star shines behind clouds and shows itself only enough for one to pass by and another appear. Oscar, I am afraid to rejoice and call you my brother, lest something happen to shadow us, too."

"Never mind, dear; it will all come out right. The only thing to do now is for you to proceed to America alone, instead of with Josef, as we originally planned. You must go as soon as you feel strong enough; and I will follow as soon as possible. I promise, dear, to bring your mother and Josef, too."

The last week of my sojourn in the hospital in Siberia was spent in preparations for the journey to America. The thought of going back to my home and my friends served as a tonic; and except for the loss of Josef and the memory of the unfortunate occurrence in St. Petersburg, I could have been happy indeed.

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Oscar stayed by me through all, and together we journeyed across the frontier toward home, that wonderful place where all is peace and quiet—a world of strife shut out, a world of love shut in.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE RETURN TO AMERICA.

OH, what a home coming! To be away from the ties of home for so long a time; to pass through so much of excitement and anxiety; to leave behind memories of sadness and regret—these make the return to the joys of home an episode, a brilliant jewel in Life's precious casket.

Oscar left me at Hamburg and returned to St. Petersburg, to continue the search for my mother. An uneventful journey across the water and I landed in New York, where Harry met me at the pier. Almost the first thing he greeted me with, after inquiries for everybody, including my Dady who, of course, came first, was, "I say, Minna, we've got a new woman at the house. I know you will like her."

"A new woman?" I asked in surprise, "Why, what do you mean? Explain yourself." "Why, a new woman of course, and she

looks like her mother. You must hurry home and see how independent she is. Why, she does all her own walking."

Then I realized what he was trying to tell me; that he was the proud father of a beautiful girl. And beautiful indeed I found her when we arrived in Chicago—a dear little tot, a year old, and just learning to walk. When we had been to the nursery, Ella threw her arms about me for the hundredth time and showed me how true and loving a sister I had in her.

"Oh, Minna," she said, "I owe it all to you; for if it had not been for you, I would not be so happy to-day—Harry's wife and the mother of that beautiful girl." And she pressed me again close to her.

"Oh, you selfish little woman!" I said. "Don't love me all yourself; leave some for my boy. Remember, I have not seen him yet. Where is he?"

"I sent him away to play this evening, for I wanted him to be surprised. I did not tell him you were coming. I hear him now. Come here, Dady," she called, "here's some one to see you."

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## The Return to America.

The little fellow came into the room and stood for a moment speechless with surprise. A second more, and he bounded across the room screaming "Mamma! Mamma! Mamma!"

I clasped him in my arms and kissed him and cried over him, until I could cry no more. Dady looked up into my face with a pleading expression.

"Oh, mamma," he said, "I am so glad you are back home! You will never go away again, will you, mamma?"

"No, darling," I replied, "Never, never again;" and the thought of all that had happened since I left him, forced an emphasis on the "never" that was positive and sincere.

It was a wee small hour we retired that night, there were so many questions to be asked and answered. Finally, when I had told all my experiences since leaving home, or as many as could be told in so short a time, we broke up the little reunion and went to bed. The last I heard, as I disappeared in my room, was Harry's voice calling:

"Now remember, Minna, no monkey busi-

ness in this country. I've had a letter from Count Karapot, and he warns me against you as a dangerous person."

"Never fear," I replied, "I've had enough of such things; I am cured. Good-night."

Back again in Chicago, happy again in the quiet of my own home, or as happy as I could be in the memory of my unfortunate experience in St. Petersburg and the conscious loss of Josef, I passed day after day in visiting the poor and spending my time in trying by this means to forget the past. Week after week, month after month went by, and no encouragement from Oscar concerning my mother or Josef. He wrote often and kept me supplied with money, so that the practice of my profession was no longer necessary; but no news of the kind I was longing for.

Finally, discouraged and dejected after four years of anxious waiting, I was glad to accept Harry's suggestion to attend a banquet, which, he said, was to be given in honor of a young law student, a friend of his, who had graduated with high honors.

"Now you come along," he said. "We're

### The Return to America.

all going and it will do you good. You've been growing thinner and thinner; until I've expected to see you blow up the chimney. Be ready about eight and we'll all go together."

Promptly at the time appointed I was ready to start, unconscious of the shock that awaited me. The banquet hall was filled with professors of the law school and friends of the young man, the guest of the evening. We sat in the back of the room, where, from my position, it was difficult to see the speakers at the guest table, until they arose.

When the banquet was over, the dean of the law school arose and, after a few preliminary remarks, spoke of the young lawyer who had so distinguished himself in the school. He congratulated both him and the school and introduced the head of the firm, with whom the young man was practising law. This gentleman was the picture of kindness, truth and professional dignity. Addressing the assemblage he said:

<sup>&</sup>quot;Gentlemen—I have the honor to rise before you to pay tribute to one who has proved himself not only an honorable and conscientious young man, but a distinguished addition to the

long list of eminent members of the bar. He has been with us four years, as a clerk in our employ while prosecuting his studies in the profession of the law, and during that time he has not alone mastered his subject, but English and Jurisprudence as well. We ask your congratulations; for we have elected him a partner in our firm and take this opportunity to mark the occasion by presenting him with this gold watch."

Turning to the young man, whom I could not see, he said:

"I ask you, sir, to accept this token of our esteem and to note the hour indicated on its face; for, from this moment, you are the fifth partner and shall continue to be such until the day you may feel disposed to sever the connection. We congratulate you, sir, upon your accomplishments in so short a time, and we congratulate ourselves upon the acquisition of so valued a member of our firm."

He sat down amid a wild burst of applause and calls of "Speech!—Speech!" In the back of the room there was craning to see the young man so highly honored, and I, myself, was so infused with the sympathetic spirit of the occasion, that I forgot my sorrows and rose in my chair, to peep at the guest of honor. At the same moment he, too, rose, in response to the calls, and I sank back into my chair, overcome with the surprise and the shock. There, before my eyes, was Josef!—Josef, my Yeshiva Bocher!—my husband!

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### The Return to America.

I grasped Ella's arm, "Look! Look!" I said. "That man whom they are honoring so, is my Josef—my husband!"

The cheers subsided and Josef began his speech.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I am a young attorney; and I think you are a little hard on me in asking a speech before such a learned assembly. I should have to lack feeling to avoid faltering to-night, and therefore I beg you to be considerate, if I fail to express my thanks in elaborate form for the honors you have heaped upon me to-night. I can only say that I promise to be in the future what I have been in all that our senior partner credits me with. He is a great man, but he isn't big enough to hold his heart. What I have said so far is not new to you; but permit me to tell you something you do not know. -You do not know what a country you are living in. I do not praise your land because everybody can wear diamonds, but because of its great privileges and opportunities. Would that you could appreciate this land as I do! Every stone is a brilliant, every inch of ground is gold in comparison with other countries, especially the one from which I come-Russia!"

His voice was drowned by the cheers, and it was some moments before he could resume.

"Friends," he continued, "you should have seen me ten years ago, or rather I thank Providence that you did not see me ten years ago; for you would have loathed me as if I were a leper. I was in my own country,—my fatherland,—Russia, where a poor man has no chance to learn to write his own name. Here I stand, man to man with you, and can only thank the liberality of this great country, which helps to make a man of

every one who has the desire and determination to be one. Oh, America. Blessed America!"

Josef sat down, completely overwhelmed with the shouts and cheers. Suddenly the great doors of an adjoining ballroom were swung open, revealing a brilliantly illuminated hall and an array of beautiful women, all awaiting the dance. The diners raised Josef in his chair, and amid the applause of all, carried him from the banquet hall to the ballroom.

Harry, who had planned the ball, took us up to a box where we could watch the dancing. Old ladies, beautiful middle-aged women and coquettish young girls flocked to meet Josef and clasp his hand. Presently the curtains of the box were drawn and Harry appeared with Josef.

"Madame!" he stammered. "You at my banquet to-night? Where is the Count?"

"He is in Russia. I came to America alone. But don't let me keep you here, we shall see each other later. Ella, this is my chain-charm of Siberia. Josef, this is the wife of your friend, Dr. Leiter."

## The Return to America.

Josef bowed. "May I have the pleasure of the first dance with the single lady?"

"I should enjoy it," I replied, "but according to the old Hebrew law, since I am engaged, I am as good as married; therefore I prefer to sit here and see what a good dancer you are. Don't spend your time with us, we will not be offended. Go and entertain the ladies."

Josef turned sorrowfully away. "I thought I might dance with you to-night," he said, and left with Harry.

"Oh, Minna," said Ella, "you are cruel. How can you be so unjust? I could not have done that to Harry."

After a few dances, Harry announced it was time to go home, "For if we don't," he said jocularly, "the 'new-woman' will arouse the neighbors."

For a few moments, I stood and looked in amazement, to see how naturally my Yeshiva bocher mingled with the society ladies and played the cavalier. We decided to leave without bidding him good-night, for we did not wish to disturb him.

On the way home, Harry promised to bring Josef to see us the next evening, and I finally retired, happy in the thought that part of my desire was to be fulfilled, for now I could reward my yeshiva bocher for his long suffering.

# CHAPTER V.

#### MY YESHIVA BOCHER.

The next day was one long to be remembered, for it brought a letter from Oscar, saying that he was leaving for America at once, and would bring my mother. My joy knew no bounds; for here was the time, arrived at last, when Josef was found, after four years of longing, and my mother was coming to me, after a lifetime of hope. Surely my cup was full; and no one could grudge the tears of joy that had been earned by so much hope, tempered with so much disappointment.

When the first shock of the news had passed away and I was free to give thought to other things, I could not help smiling when I recalled Oscar's promise, in the hospital in Siberia, to follow me soon to America and bring both my mother and Josef. He had kept the first half of the promise, to be sure; but the

second I had kept for him, in finding Josef myself. Surely it was a good joke on Oscar, and I laid elaborate plans to hide Josef and then tease him because he had failed to find him. I could see him, how sober he would look when I feigned to be angry and disappointed; for Oscar was always hurt when he failed to fulfil my wish. But then, I would not be too hard on him, for that would be cruel.

Little by little, the joy of the day made itself felt and infected the others of our little family, until everybody became light-hearted and festive. Harry came in and out, with a laugh and a joke and various comments on the "new woman."

"You see, Minna," he said grandly, "her mother is an inexperienced woman; but her father is a wise man. Women don't know anything about handling babies, they always spoil them; but the fathers know it all." And he bounded out of the room like a light-hearted boy.

Ella looked on, her face wreathed in smiles.

"Minna," she said, "I believe I am the happiest woman in the world."

# My Yeshiva Bocher.

"I believe you," I replied. "When a woman loves a man as you do, and the man has the good sense to realize and appreciate all the sacrifices his wife makes for him, there is no reason in the world why she should not be happy. I too, could be happy to-day, Ella, for I have cause to be; but that one sad memory of St. Petersburg is ever present and tempers my joy with sorrow. I suppose it must always be so, for such a deed is past forgetting."

"You must not be too severe on yourself," Ella said soothingly; "for you were only an inexperienced girl, easily impressed and always ready to sacrifice yourself for the benefit of suffering mankind."

"What you say, Ella, is partly true; but they only are wise whose actions are governed by the head, not the heart. There must be some of that, too; but it should be controlled by the head."

"But we must not spoil the happiness of today, Minna, with the regrets of yesterday. You know Josef is coming to-night and we've much to do to prepare for the return of the

prodigal. If I were in your place, I'd lecture him soundly for running away in Siberia just when you needed his services on the journey to America."

"Why, Ella! Last night, at the banquet, you called me cruel because I would not dance with him; and now you want me to lecture him for a self-sacrifice! You remember he went away from Siberia because he thought I loved Oscar and could not bear to stay by and see it all. We had no chance to tell him of our discovery, and when Oscar looked for him he was gone."

"But you will tell him when he comes tonight, won't you, Minna?"

"I certainly shall. I have waited for the opportunity these four years; and now that it has come I shall not give him another chance to slip away. You have not told Harry, have you?"

"No, he knows nothing about it. He boasts so much of knowing more than I do, I thought I would get even with him by letting him find out something I already knew. Dear Harry. He always appreciates a joke."

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# My Yeshiva Bocher.

The rest of the day was given over to joyful preparation for the great event, and we laid elaborate plans for Josef and his welcome to a happy home. Evening came, but no Josef. The hours dragged by, and no Josef. Bedtime came, and still no Josef. What could the matter be? Ella suggested that perhaps the banquet had been too much for him and probably he was ill. Harry ventured the opinion that business had kept him, for he knew he was at work on an important divorce case. My intuition told me that something was wrong; that the fate which had followed me through all my days was once more placing something desired within my grasp, only to withdraw it again. Filled with misgivings, I retired discouraged.

Morning came, and no Josef. The day dragged by, and no word from Josef. Night came again and dispelled all doubts; for I knew that Josef had again gone away, though I could assign no reason. I called Harry and begged him to see if he could find any trace of him, or learn why he had not come.

"Minna," he said, "I've always been your

friend, and I've tried to be of service to you; but I want to tell you candidly that I feel I've put my foot in it this time, though I cannot understand how. You love Oscar, and you are engaged to marry him; yet you are sad because Josef does not come. You know I have helped Josef in one way and another ever since he came to Chicago and began to study law. I did not know who he was, other than that he came from Russia, and had shown himself a good fellow, with noble sentiments and fine feelings. He said he wanted to do something for me as a return for the friendship I had shown him, and, as he persisted, I finally told him he could exercise his legal talents in procuring a divorce for you. I gave him the facts of the case yesterday, thinking what a fine surprise it would be for him to procure the freedom which would permit you to marry Oscar as soon as possible after his return to America. But I fear I have made a mistake; for I received this letter just now, which shows that my intentions were not so good after all. Read it, Minna, and forgive me if you can. It speaks for itself."

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"Oh, Harry," I cried. "What have you done? What a mistake to have kept that secret from you!" I took the letter and read it; my eyes almost blinded with tears.

My Dear Doctor Leiter: I hope you will forgive me for burdening you with such a lengthy letter, but I know of no other means to explain my hasty departure without bidding you a personal good-bye. I know you will forgive my seeming discourtesy, for your heart is big, and you, too, have once loved hopelessly and can appreciate my own condition. I know, too, that you will forgive my apparent lack of appreciation for all your kindness to me, when you know the facts of the case. I leave for New York to-day because I cannot undertake to secure the divorce as you asked me; and the explanation of my conduct is the cause of this lengthy letter, for it necessitates the revelation of a part of my life, which I have not told you before.

When I was a Yeshiva Bocher, I was tricked into a marriage, because I had never known what a conscience was. I had never been trained to that point. I married an innocent child only thirteen years of age, who was forced into the marriage by parents not even her own. They had only adopted her; and so, to be rid of her, they made her marry me. She was wiser than I and possessed of more character; so she ran away the following morning, Three years later, we found her in London, and I discovered I had a son, and that the poor child was slaving to support herself and my baby. She refused to see me; nor was I able to visit my boy. What she suffered in London, words cannot describe. She came to America shortly after, with an old lady who was to take her to a hospital where she could study to become a nurse; and then I lost track of her. After she left, her supposed parents implored me to obtain a divorce, as they were ready to find another wife for me. I refused, how-

ever, to have anything to do with them, for I was just beginning to realize how ignorant I was. I could not blame the girl because she would not live with me, for what right had I to a wife and child, when I was unable to support myself? I had lived all my life on charity. My wife hated me and ran away. She was right; but oh, my dear friend, I loved her. Yes, I loved the wife whom I had never seen but once, and I resolved, then and there, to become a man and be useful in the world. I determined to educate myself, hoping that Fate would perhaps be kind to me, and bring her and my child back to me some day; and if so, she should have every reason to love me. But how to begin, was a difficult problem to solve; and I worried and fretted until I became sick.

While in the hospital, I met an English lady, a Jewess, who was called, "The Angel of the Ward." She spent all her time in the hospitals among the sick, bringing consolation and relief to all, for she never grew tired of listening to the sorrows of others. My oppressed heart could bear its burden no longer, when the "Angel of the Ward" came to me one day and said, "Josef, my son, tell me what it is that troubles you? Do not conceal anything from me. I've made inquiries regarding you, Josef, and your past life interests me." She requested the nurse to bring a screen, which she placed about the bed, and, seating herself beside me, and taking my hand in hers, she said, "Tell me all. Tell me all."

I did so; I told her everything. Oh, my dear friend, could I paint you the picture of that noble woman when I had finished my story! She was overcome; and I did not wonder that she was called the "Angel of the Ward," for she truly suffered for every one and shared their pain. She said finally, "I'll tell you what I will do. You go back to Russia, and I will give you a letter to a cousin of mine in Moscow, who is a wealthy and influential Hebrew. I will give you all the money you need to enter college, and all I will ask in return is, that you study as hard as you can. In the meantime I will try to locate your wife and child."

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I did not feel like a beggar who was receiving charity, but like a man who was having his future assured, I determined to return the loan with deep gratitude; to show her some day, that she has been rewarded by making a man of a poor wretched Yeshiva Bocher. I accepted her offer and soon set out for Moscow with plenty of money. While there, I fell in with some Nihilist students, and, naturally, joined their society. Four years later I was one of the unfortunates who were sent to Siberia.

While in Moscow, I had had a hard time to live, because only the wealthy Hebrew merchants, who belong to the Perva Gilda, are allowed to reside there; and as I was only a poor student, I had great difficulty in being admitted to the college. The people with whom I lived wrote to a friend of theirs, a Count Karapot of St. Petersburg, who was connected with the royal house. He came to Moscow, and through his influence, all the papers were procured which were necessary for me to have to remain in Moscow, and to be admitted to the college. Now, my dear friend, you can imagine my surprise when, chained to my cart and serving my term in Siberia, the post brought me a letter from Count Karapot. It began, "My dear friend," and in it, he appealed to me to assist in caring for his future wife, who was on her way to Siberia to serve a twenty years' sentence as a Nihilist. He arranged that we should be chained together. so that I could guard and protect her until he came with her pardon from St. Petersburg. She arrived a short time after, and we worked together. We spent the days and nights in our cells, so close that we could hear one another breathing. I fell in love with her. She resembled my Minna. As my term had expired four months before Count Karapot arrived with her pardon, I left the day of his arrival, because I could not bear to remain and witness their mutual love. I had been forbidden to return to Moscow, so I came to America, and you know the rest.

Oh, my dear friend, pity me! For years I have almost lived under the same roof with my wife and child, and did not know

it. God only knows how long I might have been in ignorance of this had you not asked me yesterday to act as Minna's attorney in her suit for divorce. When you explained the kind of man Minna's husband was, and all she had gone through, I did not know for the moment, my dear friend, whether I should thank you for the news you brought me, or cry "Stop, stop, tell me no more!" It was then I found out that your Minna, and the Count's future wife, is my Minna, the wife of my youth. She loves the Count, I know; so I am going away. But believe me, dear friend, my daily prayer shall be offered solely for her happiness. The Count is a noble man; he will make her a worthy husband, and she will be a loyal wife. I thank God I have been true to my wife, though I have often reproached myself for having neglected her in my thoughts, through love for the present Minna.

My dear friend, these facts will serve to show you how hopeless is my love for the Count's future wife; and knowing them, you will readily understand that I cannot stay to assist her in procuring a divorce. Nor is it necessary for her to do so on the grounds you have laid before me. They are true; but as I am going away, never to return, she can put in a claim for desertion.

Good-bye, my noble friend. Kiss my boy for his father, remember me to your wife and do not forget the lonely,

JOSEF.

I dropped the letter and sobbed aloud.

"There, there," said Harry, "don't cry, Minna, we'll find him and bring him back. He's only gone to New York."

"It is our own fault," said Ella, "for we should not have kept it from Harry." She proceeded to tell him how Oscar had discovered

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his close relationship to me, and what a narrow escape we had from marrying a brother to a sister. Harry listened to it all, speechless with astonishment; but, noble soul that he was, he soon recovered himself and began laying plans for communicating with Josef and bringing him back to us. He even declared he would go to New York himself; but the words had no sooner been spoken than the door opened and there was Oscar, my mother and—Josef. I stood for a moment amazed. I knew it was my mother. A second more, and I was locked in her arms, sobbing and crying, "Oh, mother! My mother! At last!"

She hugged me and kissed me, and her eyes, too, were brimming with tears. "Thank God," she said, "after all these years of suffering and prayer, I am permitted to look upon my child's face. They tore you from my arms, my daughter, when you were only two days old; and I have searched for you constantly. For ten years I was confined behind stone walls, helpless in mind and body; but God had pity on me, and my mind was restored. From that

day on, I have searched the world for you, my darling. Believe me, my love, day and night, your mother has prayed for one thing only; that I might see your dear face before I die. Can you forgive me, my child? Can you learn to love me?"

I kissed her face, her head, her hands. I pressed her tightly to my breast. "Oh, mother! mother dear!" I cried. "Don't talk that way! A mother like you, to own, to love, to cherish? Learn to love you? I learned that long ago. I have suffered much to see your sweet face. Oh, mother, mother! My mother!"

Josef, took my mother by one hand and me by the other.

"My dear friend Dr. Leiter," he said. "The joy of this hour is past conception; for I have here, by one hand, the "Angel of the Ward," of whom I wrote you this morning, and by the other, the wife of my bosom, whom God has given me to love. It was a marvelous revelation when I met Count Karapot by accident at the depot, where I was about to take the train for New York. He insisted on bringing me back, and so told me that he is our brother, and

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I am free to love my wife. We have all suffered much and have earned this reward. Minna, my wife, can you love your Yeshiva Bocher?"

I could only answer by throwing myself in his strong, manly arms.

Harry came in with our boy.

"Here is your son, Josef. We are here tonight, a happy family, united after so much sorrow. We are of many faiths and different births,—Jews and Christians, bound together by the ties of love.

"Won't Christ in Heaven be delighted,
To see fulfilled His great wish;
To see His children, on earth united,
As He has taught us,—in love and peace!"

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